Australian Government
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA
Your story, our history

These copies are provided for research or study purposes. Before making use of the material for other purposes (for example publication) you should familiarise yourself with any copyright obligations.

NAA: A1838, 195/2 PART 1

Series number: A1838

Control symbol: 195/2 PART 1

Barcode: 585938

Number of pages: 197

Persian Gulf States - Muscat and Oman

CLOSED

MIDDLE EAST SUB-SECTION FILE No. 195/2 PT1

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. CLOSED 6.8.57

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

RETURN TO CENTRAL SECTION

SECRET.

SUBJECT.
PERSIAN GULF STATES Muscat and Oman

PREVIOUS FILE:	
NEXT FILE:	PT 2

D82

RELATED PAPERS.	
FILE No.	SUBJECT.
195/1	F.O. letter E 7129/1056/91 of 8-6-49
199/11/2	Buraimi Incident
1188/68	

17.... By Authority: L. F. JOHNSTON, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra.

SECRET

FILE NO. _____

SUBJECT:

RECORD OF TRANSFER OF FILE

NAME	DATE RECEIVED	NAME	DATE RECEIVED	NAME	DATE RECEIVED

CLOSED.

TRANSIT SLIP

File No.....

File Passed to.....

From.....

Date.....

Please tear off and return to
Records Clerk.....Section

TRANSIT SLIP

File No.....

File Passed to.....

From.....

Date.....

Please tear off and return to
Records Clerk.....Section

TRANSIT SLIP

File No.....

File passed to.....

From.....

Date.....

Please tear off and return to
Records Clerk.....Section

TRANSIT SLIP

File No.....

File Passed to.....

From.....

Date.....

Please tear off and return to
Records Clerk.....Section

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date August 6 1957

REBEL CHIEF ASKS U.S., RUSSIA TO HALT OMAN FIGHTING

LONDON, August 5 (A.A.P.).—The Imam of Oman, in revolt against the British-backed Sultan, today appealed to the United States and Russia to intervene to stop the fighting in Oman.

The Imam's representative in Cairo called on the U.S. and Russian embassies with the appeal soon after the nine-nation Arab League had announced an appeal to the Asian-African bloc to intervene against Britain.

The appeals were made as the news from Oman itself indicated that an attack on the rebels by British ground forces was imminent.

The Imam's appeal brings Russia into the Oman dispute for the first time.

Confused reports from the almost isolated Sultanate suggest that the area held by the rebels is much larger than at first believed.

The Cairo correspondent of United Press quotes the Imam's representative as saying that his appeals requested "intervention for a cease-fire and negotiations to establish peace between us and the aggressors, with a view to respecting the frontiers of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman on the conditions that our frontiers and independence are respected and our rights respected."

The messages also allegedly stated: "The British military intervention is a violation of the agreement between ourselves and the sultan and it has not yet stopped."

The general secretary of the Arab League, Abdel Khalek Hassouna, announced the league's appeal.

It was addressed to the nine league nations and 20 other Asian and African nations, including Communist China.

It urged them to support Oman in her struggle and to intervene to stop British aggression against her.

The 29 nations are India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, Indonesia, Communist China, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Turkey, Japan, Egypt, Abyssinia, Persia, Iraq, Jordan, the Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, Cambodia, Laos, Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, Philippines, Sudan, Siam, North Vietnam and South Vietnam.

Rebels Further East

Latest reports from the Sultanate indicate that the area held by the rebels is much larger than at first thought.

The latest reports suggest that rebel influence has spread to about 60 miles east of Izki, hitherto the easternmost point of rebel-held territory.

It is not certain whether the intervening territory also is rebel-controlled.

An official British spokesman at the British base at Bahrein said that lack of sufficient detailed information prevented him from giving a clear picture of the situation.

The R.A.F., in its reports of which forts and towns are in rebel hands, now points out that the rebels may be flying the Sultan's red flag to escape attack from the air.

Only Air Strikes So Far

Most reports suggest that the rebels hold a strip of territory 85 miles long roughly parallel to and about 40 miles from Oman's northern coast.

British intervention so far has been restricted to air strikes against rebel-held forts.

The planes have operated from Sharjah in neighbouring Trucial Oman.

Now British ground forces are believed to be concentrating round Ibri, between Saudi-Arabia and the rebel-held areas, in readiness for an assault on Nizwa, the rebel headquarters.

The British troops apparently have moved down from Buraimi, on the northern border of Oman.

They are thus between the rebel forces and Saudi Arabia, where the rebels are believed to be obtaining their supplies.

According to the American Associated Press correspondent at Bahrein, British troops and armoured cars fanned out from their bases in Oman yesterday in preparation for their assault on Nizwa.

However, no contacts between the rebels and the British-supported forces of the Sultan have been reported.

Rebels were reported for the first time yesterday to have fired on an R.A.F. plane.

A Shackleton was said to have a bullet hole in the port wing and another in the port tailplane when it returned to Bahrein.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date. August 6 1957

Gloves Off In Oman

There will be general relief that Britain has at last taken firm and positive action to end the rebellion in Oman. Had troops been dispatched at the beginning of this miserable affair it could have been over before it had fairly begun. British hesitations, whatever the reasons for them, gave the Imam and his brother time to raise the countryside, and encouraged local waverers to believe Cairo Radio's assertions that Britain no longer had the will or the power to help her friends. They also allowed hostile propagandists, in Moscow and Arab capitals, to pretend to the world that a handful of ambitious sheiks were patriotic nationalists.

As a result, the Oman affair has been blown up out of all proportion. An element of farce has now been added by the Imam's appeal to the United States and Russia to intervene. The whole sorry business has never been any more, in a military sense, than the sort of frontier tribal disturbance with which the British were constantly dealing before the war, and is apparently on an even smaller scale than the recent skirmishing on the Aden borders. Its economic and political implications— the threat to potential oilfields in Oman, the ambitions of Saudi-Arabia, the need to maintain British influence in the Persian Gulf—were added arguments for swift action in sufficient strength.

If Britain has been staying her hand in deference to American susceptibilities, reports suggest that this was an error of judgment, and that Washington has in fact been seriously embarrassed by the long delay in dealing with the rebels. The only other plausible explanation for the reliance on air demonstrations which of their very nature could never achieve a decisive result is lack of adequate British forces in the area, and some colour is given to this by the scratch nature of the force which has now been assembled. One desirable result of the Oman bungle might well be a searching inquiry into the effectiveness of the post-Suez British military dispositions in the Middle East.

But now at length British troops are on the move, and, although there seem to be deplorably few of them for the show of strength which is more than ever necessary, they should be able to clean up the mess in quick time. The military opposition they face is negligible—the "fairly hard core of resolute men" of which the local commander makes so much is unlikely to number more than a couple of hundred untrained ruffians. Most of the local villagers will raise the flag of whoever has the biggest force nearest. The sooner the Sultan's authority is re-established the better for Britain's prestige in a sensitive area.

1952.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CONFIDENTIAL

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

I.10906

Sent: 30th July, 1957.
Rec'd: 6th August, 1957.
1100

BH

FROM:

External Affairs Office,
LONDON.

Sav Ex 296. CONFIDENTIAL.

Repeated Australian Embassy, Washington Ex 231.

From External.

Oman.

According to a telegram of 26th July from the United Kingdom Embassy at Washington, an Omani representative recently called on the United States Consul-General at Dharan to interest him in the Omani cause. The Consul-General told him that the United States policy was not to interfere in other countries' internal affairs, in which category the present trouble seemed to fall. The State Department has approved the Consul-General's suggestion that any further contacts with Omanis in Dharan are undesirable lest they make propaganda use of them and has instructed the Consul-General to make it clear, should the need arise, that the United States is not, and does not wish to become involved in the present troubles.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A. 6th August, 1957.

SEC A/Ss UN PAC&AM AM&SP CR S&SEA SA EAF&ME E AF&ME INF
DL MT C&P
G.

CONFIDENTIAL

1952

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

SECRET

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

HMD

I.10908

Dated: 30th July, 1957
Rec'd: 6th August, 1957
1100

FROM:-

External Affairs Office,
L O N D O N.

SAV. EX298. SECRET.

To External, repeated Washington EX233.

from External.

Oman.

As you will already have been advised through the United Kingdom High Commission in Canberra, the Foreign Office instructed United Kingdom heads of mission in Amman, Bagdad, Beirut, Khartoum, Teheran and Ankara to inform the Governments to which they were accredited of the reasons why the United Kingdom had decided to come to the Sultan's aid. The heads of mission were to say in addition that the United Kingdom would be grateful if the various Governments could let King Saud know that the United Kingdom did not wish the situation in Oman to delay the restoration of good relations between the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia.

2. The following account of reactions to the United Kingdom approach and of the attitude towards the situation in Oman of Middle Eastern countries will supplement the information conveyed to you in our telegram No. 1808 of 30th July:-

(a) Iran. The Iranians said that they were willing to use what influence they had with King Saud, as the United Kingdom asked, but they considered that Egyptian propaganda use of the situation in Oman would prove too strong for them. The United Kingdom Ambassador comments that situation in Oman is causing the press in Iran to raise again the Suez bogies - anti-colonialism, Muslim solidarity, dislike of violence, alleged contempt of the United Nations etc. The Iranian reaction might partly be explained by reference to the ease with which Iranian ambitions and susceptibilities can always be aroused in relation to the Persian Gulf.

(b) Iraq. The attitude of the Iraqi Government has so far been non-committal and when publicly pressed to state their attitude they have pleaded lack of information. Iraqi press comment has been restrained but, in view of the United Kingdom Embassy, it is unlikely that this state of affairs will last. The Iraqi Foreign Ministry made no comment when told of United Kingdom views on the situation in Oman.

(c) Jordan. The Jordanian Foreign Minister agreed with the United Kingdom refusal to condemn the Saudi Arabians publicly for their help to the rebels in Oman and expressed the hope that the United Kingdom would persevere in this attitude. He said that the objective treatment of the rebellion by the Jordanian Press and Radio had been spontaneous but that, if necessary, the Government would intervene to maintain this attitude. The Foreign ...

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

SECRET

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

I.10908

Minister undertook to ask King Hussein to send to Saud a message of the type desired by the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom Embassy comment that Jordanian public opinion is apathetic in relation to Oman and that Cairo Radio's attempts to stimulate interest seem to have failed.

(d) Lebanon. (please see our savingram No. 292).

(e) Turkey. The Turkish Foreign Ministry received the explanation of the United Kingdom view sympathetically and undertook to recommend that a message be sent to King Saud in the sense the United Kingdom had asked.

(f) Libya. Libyan press comment has not so far been very adverse towards United Kingdom action in Oman, but the United Kingdom Embassy believes it may become so unless fighting quickly dies down.

(g) Tunisia. Tunisian press comment has tended to emphasize conflict of United Kingdom and United States interests in relation to the rebellion in Oman. Some Arab newspapers have also followed the line put out by Cairo Radio and described the revolt as "the awakening of Arab consciousness among the Oman liberals".

3. According to the United Kingdom Embassy at Bagdad, the Secretary-General of the Arab League has sent a memorandum to member States, inviting their attention to the grave situation in Oman and urging them to assist the people there to achieve their independence.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE

6th August, 1957.

SEC A/Ss L&T(DIV.5) UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA SEA
E.F&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P

G

SECRET

195/2

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CONFIDENTIAL

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

..:VA

I. 10901

Sent: 29th July, 1957.

Rec'd: 6th August, 1957
1100

FROM:

External Affairs Office,
LONDON.

SAV. EX292. CONFIDENTIAL.

Repeated Australian Embassy, Washington Ex228.

Oman.

According to a report we have seen from the United Kingdom Embassy at Beirut, the United Kingdom Ambassador there called on the Lebanese Foreign Minister on 22nd July to outline to him the United Kingdom view on the situation in Oman. Malik said that he was quite ready to believe that the Egyptians and the Saudi Arabians were implicated and that the United Kingdom would be quite right in taking severe measures against the rebels on the Sultan's behalf. He hoped these measures would be rapid and effective. According to the United Kingdom Ambassador, Malik did not seem disturbed by the situation.

2. The Lebanese Government have since issued a statement that they have so far no official information which would enable them to express an opinion on the situation in Oman. They were meanwhile following developments in accordance with Lebanon's obligations as an Arab League member and with the numerous resolutions taken by the Arab League Council on Muscat and Oman

3. The United Kingdom Embassy at Beirut has reported that Hayat, the most reputable right-wing and pro-Western Arab language newspaper in the Lebanon, in its editorial of 24th July, welcomed the revolt in Oman in the name of Arab union. The United Kingdom Embassy considers that this is a fairly strong indication that public reaction to the revolt, while still for the time being fairly restrained (apart from the left-wing Press), will rapidly become more anti-British the longer the revolt lasts.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - -

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE

6th August, 1957.

SEC A/Ss L&T(DIV.5) UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA SEA
EAF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P

CONFIDENTIAL

G

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
-6 AUG 1957
1957
CANBERRA.

In reply quote No. 605/12

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY,
DJAKARTA.

Memo No. 1361

1st August, 1957

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA ..... A.C.T.

Indonesian Comment on Oman

In its characteristic zeal to jump into criticism of actions of other Governments, the Indonesian Foreign Ministry has not been slow to comment on events in Oman. According to the "Antara" news agency on 30th July, "competent circles in the Foreign Affairs Ministry" said that it was seriously studying the latest events. The statement commented that it was logical "that frictions among the social groupings arose in new countries, including those in Asia and Africa. However, such frictions must not be misused by a foreign state for her own interest, since such would call for another intervention of another state at the invitation of the opponents."

2. According to the statement, the Ministry thought that Indonesia had better wait to see what attitude other Arab countries adopted before considering what steps should be taken to prevent the spread of trouble. As regards British action, the Ministry's view was stated to be that although the Sultanate had a protectorate agreement with Britain, it should settle its disputes with other groups on its own account.

(J.M. McMillan)
Counsellor

GR.

With the Compliments

of the

Official Secretary

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom,
Canberra, A. C. T.

Mr Kevin DEA

SECRET

1952

Text of Commonwealth Relations Office Telegram Circular W.

No. 670 dated the 5th August, 1957.

My Telegram Circular W. 669.

OMAN

You will have seen from my telegram under reference outline of our plans for next phase. Only subsequent news is that some further air strikes have been carried out but that only current activity consists of air patrols and reconnaissance.

2. Today's United Kingdom Press carries reports of signs of spread of rebellion. In our view however their is nothing to indicate that rebels have gained new ground.

3. My immediately following presse telegram contains text of communique issued at Press Conference in Bahrain on August 4.

SECRET

Text of Commonwealth Relations Office
Telegram Circular W. No.671, dated
5th August, 1957.

My immediately preceding telegram.

OMAN

Following is text of communique issued at Press Conference at Bahrain on August 4th. BEGINS.

"Four R.A.F. Venom aircraft flew sorties in the prohibited area. Three ton truck which was attacked north of Nizwa and reported destroyed on August 2nd was again attacked and set on fire. It is confirmed that four Landrovers and one lorry at Firq Old Camp are badly damaged. A red flag was seen at a village in the area of Sint. Two runs were made over Ghafat village. On second a red flag was observed on tower". "Two R.A.F. Meteor aircraft made a fighter reconnaissance of villages between Izki and Samail. Photographs were taken". "One R.A.F. Shackleton aircraft made a reconnaissance flight over central Oman during which leaflets were dropped over central and eastern Sharqiya Provinces. Leaflets called on tribes to remain loyal to Sultan. A White Flag was seen at Mintrib village. No flags seen at other Sharqiya villages or at Qabil and those villages which were flying white flags on August 2nd. In prohibited area white flag flew over Nizwa but red flags were seen at villages of Ghafat Hamra and north Izki." ENDS.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Daily Telegraph File No. 195/2.

Published at Sydney Date. August 13 1957.

West.

DULLES "BACKS UK ON OMAN"

LONDON, Sun. — America wants Britain to get tough in Oman, the Sunday Express said yesterday.

The newspaper said United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who bitterly opposed the use of force in the Suez dispute, had urged Britain to step up action against the rebels.

The Sunday Express said Mr. Dulles warned that if the action against the rebels dragged on the trouble might spread to other oil States of the Persian Gulf.

It said that the British and American Governments feared that Cairo intriguers, backed by Russia, would involve other areas.

The Foreign Office said that British forces supporting the Sultan of Muscat in his campaign against the rebel Imam (religious leader) of Oman were limited in number.

The British forces would play only a "supporting role."

They would withdraw as soon as the Sultan's troops were firmly established in the rebel area.

British troops yesterday began moving into Muscat territory to support an assault on the fort of Nizwa, headquarters of the rebel forces.

In **CAIRO**, Sheik Mohamed El Harithy, the Iman of Oman's representative, said the Imam would appeal to the United Nations to stop "British aggression."

The Imam also had appealed to the Afro-Asian group of countries for immediate aid. — A.A.P.-R., U.P.

195/2.

(This Savingram is being circulated within the Department of External Affairs only. No copy or extract may be made from it.)

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

::HP

I.10860

Dated: 28th July, 1957.

FROM:

Rec'd: 5th August, 1957.

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

Saving 281. UNCLASSIFIED.

Following is telegram No.1463 from the British Embassy to the Foreign Office:

Oman: American Comment.

The East Coast press and radio are watching the situation in Oman closely. Although no great concern has been expressed so far, it is thought that the situation is potentially dangerous.

2. The press and radio are taking their lead from British press and official sources. Your statement of 22nd July in the House of Commons was given fairly widespread publicity. Especial attention was paid to Her Majesty's Government's decision to respond to the Sultan's request for help; in this connection a number of United States correspondents in London have raised the spectre of a "possible clash between British and American interests". Correspondents are reporting also from London that "the rebellion is clearly backed by Saudi Arabia", and some papers have made reference to the charges in some United Kingdom papers that "United States oil magnates, co-operating with Saudi Arabia, are behind the Imam". Higgins in a front-page story in this morning's "New York Herald Tribune" reported that "the United States is so far staying strictly neutral ..... But it is appreciated in official circles (in Washington) that Great Britain is acting with caution and official correctness"; "in official eyes ..... there is no comparison over the situation in Oman and the recent Egyptian crisis ..... and in opinion here, no chance of a conflict of interests". This report went on to say that "as to charges that American oil companies are on the side of the rebels and are intriguing to get the British out of the area, this was categorically denied at the State Department, which pointed out that the two oil companies now operating in the area are part of a British consortium".

3. So far, only the "New York Times", the "New York Herald Tribune" and the "Baltimore Sun" have commented editorially. They agree that the "potentialities for wider trouble are many"; that "British oil supplies may be endangered"; and that "this could range American-backed King Saud against Britain and cause new strains between Britain and the United States". The "Times" pointed the finger of ultimate responsibility at President Nasser, and commented that "the fruits of appeasement are beginning to sprout".

Min. & Dept. External Affairs.

5th August, 1957.

SEC A/Ss L&T(Div.5) UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA SEA EAF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
-5 AUG 1957
195/2
CANBERRA.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE
AUSTRALIA HOUSE
LONDON

File No. 3/12/65/2

29th July 1957

Memo. No. 111/8/57.

Memorandum for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra, A.C.T.

I enclose herewith for your information extracts from the House of Commons Hansard of 23rd July 1957 being column (s) 230-235. Vol.574 No. 147 concerning

Situation in Central Oman

G.B. Feakes
(G.B. Feakes)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

GR

GBF

Extract from "PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES" Vol. 574. No. 147.
23rd July, 1957. (Col. 230-235).

the Regular Forces Resettlement Service and to find a capable chairman who can help to direct the work. I will see that note is taken of the suggestions which my hon. Friend has made.

I am not informed whether it is proposed to have direct representatives of ex-Service men, but I will also take note of that point.

Mr. Wigg: Would the Prime Minister provide time between now and the Recess to enable the House to have an opportunity of debating the two White Papers? Everyone will wish the Government's reorganisation well, because a great deal rests on it. Will the Prime Minister give the House an assurance that he is satisfied, after careful examination of the facts, that the existing terms of Service rates of pay and rate of recruitment will be sufficient to provide enough men when the reorganisation has been completed?

The Prime Minister: No doubt the question of a debate will be discussed through the usual channels. Whether time can be found is a matter to be settled. They will have to be debated at some time, of course.

With regard to the second question, that is another, although a very important, aspect of it. What I was anxious to do was to clear up these three points which must be got out of the way first. I thought that it would be valuable to do so before the end of this part of the Session.

Mr. Sharples: Can my right hon. Friend give an assurance that those who are to be declared redundant will be told of their fate as soon as possible, instead of being left in doubt a moment longer than necessary?

The Prime Minister: I am sure that the Service Departments will do everything they can to expedite these rearrangements, but, of course, my hon. Friend will recognise that there are a good many problems involved.

Mr. de Freitas: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that those who seek the closer integration of the Services on grounds of efficiency and economy will be extremely disappointed at the way in which the Prime Minister caricatured this by his reference to vague and indeterminate uniforms? That is not the point.

The Prime Minister: I still maintain—and I hope that when the hon. Gentleman, who takes a great interest in these matters, reads it he will agree—that this is a fairly balanced statement. There must be for all the time that we can see ahead three Services. But I did say there was a great deal of work that could be done in the integration of the command structure, administrative arrangements and all the rest.

But from the point of view of the men—and we are now thinking of the officers and men who are to join these Services—their great interest is in knowing whether they are joining the Army, the Navy or the Air Force. The other problems of centralised administration and the rest are more for us. I want to make it clear to them what kind of a Service they will be asked to join.

Mr. Chetwynd: In view of reports of resistance from individual Services to reductions in their particular arm, is the Prime Minister satisfied that the powers of the Minister of Defence are adequate to impose the overall pattern which he wishes?

The Prime Minister: I do not know the purpose of that question, nor its relevance.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

CENTRAL OMAN (SITUATION)

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Selwyn Lloyd): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House, I wish to make a statement on the situation in Central Oman.

I undertook yesterday to inform the House of any further developments in the situation there. I have received little further information about the situation on the ground, but the military preparations to which I have referred have continued.

It will, perhaps, help the House to form a judgment on these matters if I remind the House about the nature of the area in which the disturbances have taken place. The Central Oman is a mountainous area, the highest mountains rising to 9,000 feet. It is surrounded by desert where the present temperatures

GBF Extract from "PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES" Vol. 574. No. 147. 23rd July,1957. (Col. 230-235).

[MR. LLOYD.]

are up to 120 degrees. There is no front line, but rather a constantly shifting pattern of tribal allegiances and defections, with minor armed skirmishes. There is no question, therefore, of large-scale operations by British troops on the ground.

As I said yesterday, discretion has been given to our local military authorities to take any necessary action on their own initiative within certain limits. So far as the Royal Air Force is concerned, this includes leaflet dropping on behalf of the Sultan together with action against certain forts in the area held by dissident tribesmen. These forts, manned by tribesmen equipped with modern arms smuggled in from outside the country, are capable of intimidating both loyal and wavering tribes. I would emphasise that action has only been authorised against certain military targets.

The real issue is not the scale of the military operations, but the fact that Her Majesty's Government intend to give full support to the Sultan.

Mr. Bevan: I could not help thinking, when listening to the right hon. and learned Gentleman, that in some of his language he was describing the Parliamentary situation—when he said that the present temperatures were up to 120 degrees, that there was " no front line but rather a constantly shifting pattern of tribal allegiances and defections, with minor armed skirmishes."

Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman say whether outside intervention has yet been formally established and, if so, from where? For example, Saudi Arabia has been suggested. If it is from Saudi Arabia, what steps has the right hon. and learned Geitleman taken to approach the American Government with a view to bringing pressure to bear on Saudi Arabia, as Saudi Arabia recently received supplies of arms from the United States? Is it not, therefore, necessary to take all the steps we possibly can, with the forces over which we have some diplomatic control and influence, before we ourselves take too strong a line with our own armed forces?

Mr. Lloyd: We know that certain arms must have been smuggled into the country from outside, because modern arms have been found in the possession of the dissidents. From where those arms come, we do not know. We have certain suspicions. The most effective method of dealing with the situation is to see that the means of entry for further arms are closed off and that we propose to do. I am not yet in a position to say anything about allegations against a particular foreign country. As for discussions with the United States Government, they have been kept in close touch with the situation.

Mr. Bevan: Would it not be desirable, even if no more could be done, for the American Government to prevail upon the Government of Saudi Arabia themselves to make a statement deprecating violence in this matter? Is it too much to ask of the United States that they approach Saudi Arabia with a view to that end? As these incidents arising in the Middle East from time to time give rise to anxiety and to interventions by this or that Government, has not the time arrived for us to take the situation more firmly in hand with a view to having arrangements among ourselves, the United States and other countries so that we may avoid these collisions, which are becoming increasingly dangerous?

Mr. Lloyd: We are in touch with the United States Government about these matters. I do not think that any useful purpose is served by making allegations against particular Governments at this moment. I agree that we have to seek to stop the movement of further arms into this area and to induce other Governments or individuals not to supply those arms. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that we should take firm action about the matter. We have taken and propose to take firm action in the case of Muscat.

Mr. A. Henderson: Is it not true that the Government of Saudi Arabia have been supplying arms to the dissident elements in Oman and is not that in contravention of their obligations under the Charter? If so, would it not be desirable to send United Nations observers into the area to investigate and report?

Mr. Lloyd: That is obviously an aspect of the matter which we have to discuss with our allies. It has been discussed with our allies, but I certainly have no further statement to make upon it.

We are continuing to do our best to see that the area is sealed off and that no further arms get in. I do not think that United Nations observers will serve a useful purpose in this case.

Mr. Grimond: The Foreign Secretary said yesterday that he would consider setting out in a White Paper, or in another way, our obligations under the treaties. Has he considered that matter any further and, if so, is he proposing to make a statement on our obligations under existing treaties? Will he consider clarifying our obligations to various Rulers around the Gulf and possibly negotiating new treaties which define them more clearly?

Mr. Lloyd: I will certainly consider that matter further, but I would point out to the House that the action Her Majesty's Government have taken in this case is not novel. There are precedents for it. In 1930, when there was a Labour Government, British naval vessels were authorised to bombard the Northern Muscat coast where the Sheik of Khassab had defied the Sultan's authority. That action took place and the Sheik submitted to the Sultan's authority. Similar action was taken under another Government, in 1932. So there are precedents for action in support of one who has been throughout a firm and loyal ally of this country.

Mr. Benn: What is the position of British airmen who may be shot down on reconnaissance flights, or leaflet dropping flights, or strafing flights by Royal Air Force aircraft? Why did the right hon. and learned Gentleman not inform the House yesterday that armed reconnaissance flights had taken place, when his noble Friend the Joint Under-Secretary was courteous enough to inform noble Lords in another place? It would have totally altered the character of our discussion yesterday had we known that British airmen had been flying over foreign territory on reconnaissance raids.

Mr. Lloyd: I said that certain authority had been given within limits to the military authorities on the spot. I very much hope that airmen will not be shot down. I do not understand the purpose of the question. Such airmen are acting in the armed service of the Crown. If, through misfortune or hostile action, they become casualties, that is a matter which all quarters of the House will profoundly regret.

Mr. Paget: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has told us that we are giving all assistance to the Sultan and then says that it is apparently too hot to do anything. Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman give us an assurance that assistance to the Sultan is likely to be effective? Is he aware that our prestige in that part of the world will hardly stand another exhibition of the Government's military futility?

Mr. Lloyd: It would be an example of military futility to seek to employ ground forces in those temperatures in desert areas. What has to be done is to seal off this area of disaffection—[HON. MEMBERS: " How? "] By blocking the means of entry into it.

Mr. Paget: Where from?

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. and learned Member is getting very excited. If he would look at the map, he would see the means of entry into this place, the way in which the roads run and where blocking action could take place. That is one side of the operation, to seal off the area of the disaffection. The second side of the operation is the air action which has been authorised.

Mr. Peart: Is the Foreign Secretary aware that it is not a question of making serious allegations against other Governments but rather that we must bear in mind that this happened before in the Buraimi Oasis and that it is important to know what Aramco, an American oil company, is doing there, because it was said on a previous occasion that it gave support against British interests? That must be borne in mind. It is vital, therefore, that there should be consultation with the United States Government on this issue.

Mr. Lloyd: Those consultations are taking place.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This matter can be pursued further in the debate that is to follow in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Benn: On a point of order. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I sought to move the Adjournment of the House under

GBF Extract from "PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES" Vol. 574. No. 147. 23rd July,1957. (Col. 230-235).

[MR. BENN.]
Standing Order No. 9 to raise what I thought to be a definite matter of urgent public importance, which was the statement made by the Foreign Secretary in which he said that British troops had been given permission to go into action. You, Mr. Speaker, decided that this did not fall within the provisions of the Standing Order and you invited one of my hon. Friends to take what action he thought necessary to criticise your action and to do so in the normal way.

I beg to give notice, Mr. Speaker, that after further consideration, one of my hon. Friends and myself have decided to pursue this matter in the way that you quite correctly directed us to do: that is to say, to table a Motion regretting the Ruling that you gave yesterday.

Mr. Speaker: I have no objection to that at all.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That this day Business other than the Business of Supply may be taken before Ten o'clock.—[*The Prime Minister.*]

Proceedings on the Affiliation Proceedings Bill [*Lords*] and the Housing Bill [*Lords*] exempted, at this day's Sitting, from the provisions of Standing Order No. 1 (Sittings of the House).—[*The Prime Minister.*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY

[24TH ALLOTTED DAY]

Considered in Committee.

[Sir GORDON TOUCHE in the Chair]

CIVIL ESTIMATES AND ESTIMATES FOR REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1957-58, AND MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ESTIMATE, 1957-58.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That a further sum, not exceeding £20, be granted to Her Majesty, towards defraying the charges for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1958, for services connected with the following Departments, namely:—

CIVIL ESTIMATES, 1957-58 AND MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ESTIMATE, 1957-58

	£
Class II, Vote 1 (Foreign Service) ...	10
Ministry of Defence	10
Total ...	£20

DISARMAMENT

4.3 p.m.

Mr. Philip Noel-Baker (Derby, South): The Foreign Secretary, in his White Paper, for which we thank him, confined himself to a survey of the efforts now being made in the Disarmament Sub-Committee of the United Nations to reach agreement on certain partial measures of disarmament. I know that the right hon. and learned Gentleman realises what a shock it is to outside opinion to learn that these rather meagre objectives are all that the Government are at present hoping to obtain and I am sure he regrets, as we do, how very partial these partial measures are.

I will discuss those measures a little later. I want, first, to put them against a wider background, against the very dangerous developments in armaments since 1952 and against the facts—the very gloomy facts—of the disarmament discussions since the United Nations set up its present Disarmament Commission in that year.

I start from several propositions with which, I hope, the whole Committee agrees: that no nation has a greater interest in international—not unilateral—

Extract from "PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES" Vol. 574. No. 147.
23rd July 1957. (Col. 230-235).

[Mr. Bence]

Standing Order No. 9 to raise what I thought to be a definite matter of urgent public importance, which was the statement made by the Foreign Secretary in which he said that British troops had been given permission to go into action. You, Mr. Speaker, decided that this did not fall within the provisions of the Standing Order and you invited one of my hon. Friends to take what action he thought necessary to criticise your action and to do so in the normal way.

I beg to give notice, Mr. Speaker, that after further consideration, one of my hon. Friends and myself have decided to pursue this matter in the way that you quite correctly directed us to do: that is to say, to table a Motion regretting the Ruling that you gave yesterday.

Mr. Speaker: I have no objection to that at all.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered.

That this day Business other than the Business of Supply may be taken before Ten o'clock.—[*The Prime Minister.*]

Proceedings on the Affiliation Proceedings Bill [*Lords*] and the Housing Bill [*Lords*] exempted, at this day's Sitting, from the provisions of Standing Order No. 1 (Sittings of the House).—[*The Prime Minister.*]

3/12/65/2

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY

[24TH ALLOTTED DAY]

Considered in Committee.

[SIR GORDON TOUCHE in the Chair]

CIVIL ESTIMATES AND ESTIMATES FOR REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1957-58, AND MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ESTIMATE, 1957-58.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That a further sum, not exceeding £20, be granted to Her Majesty, towards defraying the charges for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1958, for services connected with the following Departments, namely:—

CIVIL ESTIMATES, 1957-58 AND MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ESTIMATE, 1957-58

	£
Class II, Vote 1 (Foreign Service) ...	10
Ministry of Defence	10
Total ...	£20

DISARMAMENT

4.3 p.m.

Mr. Philip Noel-Baker (Derby, South): The Foreign Secretary, in his White Paper, for which we thank him, confined himself to a survey of the efforts now being made in the Disarmament Sub-Committee of the United Nations to reach agreement on certain partial measures of disarmament. I agree that the right hon. and learned Gentleman realises what a shock it is to outside opinion to learn that those rather meagre objectives are all that the Government are at present hoping to obtain and I am sure he regrets, as we do, how very partial these partial measures are.

I will discuss those measures a little later. I want, first, to put them against a wider background, against the very dangerous developments in armaments since 1945 and against the facts—the [illegible] facts—of the disarmament [illegible] since the United Nations set up the present Disarmament Commission in this year.

I start from several propositions with which, I hope, the whole Committee agrees: that no nation has a greater interest in international—not unilateral—

1952

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. CONFIDENTIAL

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

JPW:SS

I. 10819

Dated: 2nd August, 1957
1945

FROM:

Rec'd: 3rd August, 1957
1000

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON

905. CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed Canberra 905, repeated Australian Mission to the United Nations, New York, London Saving 153.

Oman.

We asked Newsom today whether the State Department believed Saudi Arabia was implicated in Oman Affair. He said that one could only speculate. On one hand Saud might be making attempt to harass the British or be acting in response to appeals for assistance from inner Oman. On other hand his inaction might suggest that he was not implicated. It was conceivable that he had grown tired of giving hospitality to supporters from inner Oman who had been agitating for Saudi Arabian help in an independence movement and had sent them packing. In this case he might have no wish to intervene or take any positive role in present Oman affair. Equally he might suspect that Egypt is behind the revolt and he might not wish to assist in adding to Egyptian influence in the area. Newsom was inclined to think that the latter explanation was more likely especially in view of improvement in Saud's attitude to British over recent months.

2. Newsom said that apart from Syria and Egypt, reaction to the Oman situation in other Middle East countries had been fairly subdued. Syria was the spearhead of the anti-British campaign most recent evidence of which was Syrian attempt to work up support in Arab-Asian bloc for presentation of a letter to the Security Council on British action in Oman. He understood that the Indians and Pakistanis, and even the Egyptians, had opposed such action.

MIN & DEPT EA
MIN & DEPT DEFENCE
P.M.'s

3rd August, 1957

SEC A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA EAF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P

G

CONFIDENTIAL

1952.

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

SS:HMD

I. 10784

Dated: 2nd August, 1957
2052
Rec'd: 3rd August, 1957
0900

FROM:-

Australian High Commission,
L O N D O N.

1839. SECRET.

Addressed Canberra 1839, repeated Washington 167.

From External.

Oman.

Beeley, Foreign Office, informed me today that an announcement regarding the move of British troops into Muscat would be made probably on 3rd September though timing was left to the discretion of Burrows.

2. Beeley said the objective was to end the hostilities quickly. However, the British troops would only be used in the last resort and their role would be primarily to give support behind the Muscat forces and Trucial Oman Scouts. Their assessment of the military situation was that resistence was unlikely. Only in the event of resistence and failure of local troops would the British troops be used.

3. British troops in Muscat will come from Bahrain and the latter will be replaced by troops from Kenya.

4. Beeley anticipates an early conclusion to the incident and reference to United Nations is unlikely.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE
P.M.'S.

3rd August, 1957

SEC A/Ss UN CR P.C&A.. A.&SP S&SE.. S.. E.F&ME E
AF&ME INF DL M.T. C&P

...:MS

CONFIDENTIAL

195/2

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD CABLEGRAM

10753

Dated: 1st August, 1957.
1220
Rec'd: 2nd August, 1957.
0930

FROM:

Australian Mission to the United Nations,
N E W Y O R K.

945. CONFIDENTIAL.

Repeated Washington for information.

London telegram 129.

Oman.

London's 1808 to you.

United Kingdom delegation confirm that Syria is trying to work up an appeal to be delivered either to the United Kingdom or Secretary-General, in either case, with the maximum publicity. United Kingdom say India and Pakistan have not responded to the Syrian move.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE
P.M.'s.

2nd August, 1957.

SEC A/Ss L&T(DIV.5) UN@ CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA
E.AF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P

G

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

OUTWARD TELETYPE MESSAGE.

MESSAGE NUMBER 1241 2/8/57 1750

1952

TO MINISTER FROM TANGE.

SECRET.

FOLLOWING TELEGRAMS RECEIVED FROM UNITED KINGDOM HIGH COMMISSION.

662. SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

REPEATED COLOMBO, ACCRA.

OMAN.

MY PRECEDING TELEGRAM. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NO.55 GUIDANCE.

BEGINS:-

YOU SHOULD BE GUCH GUIDED BY MY IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING TELEGRAM WHEN THE NEW BREAKS PROBABLE 3RD AUGUST., IN DISCREET COMMENT IN FRIENDLY CIRCLES YOU SHOULD ALSO STRESS THE FOLLOWING POINT. THE PRIMARY REQUIREMENT IS TO RESTORE STABILITY QUICKLY. THE LONGER THE TROUBLE LASTS THE GREATER THE CHANCE THAT IT WILL BE EXPLH EXPLOITED BY THE SOVIET AND ANTI-COLONIALIST BLOC. ANY DISADVANCH DISADVANTAGES IN THE USE OF BRITISH TROOPS ARE TRIVIAL IN COMPARISON.

2. IF NECESSARY YOU MAY ALSO POINT OUT THAT THOS GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO USE THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT AS EVIDENCE OF '' COLONIALISM'' OR ''IMPERIALISTIC AGGRESSION'' ARE LEVELLING ACCUSATIONS OF THIS SORT AGAINST US ALREADY. NO DOUBT THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO WHETHER BRITISH LAND FORCES WERE USED OR NOT.

3. FOR YOUR INFORMATION THREE COMPANIES OF CAMEROWIANS AND TWO SQUADRONS OF THE BRITISH OFFICERED TRUCIAL OMAN SCOUTS ARE LIKELY TO BE USED. THESE REPRESENT FORCES MORE POWERFUL THEN ANY WHICH CAN BE DEPLOYED BY THE SULTAN AND WITHH WITHOUT THEIR AID THE OPERATIONS MIGHT BE UNDULY PROLONGED. IN PUBLIC HOWEVER IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONVEY THAT THE SULTAN'S FORCES ARE DOING MOST OF THE WORK AND THAT BRITISH FORCES ARE THERE ONLY AS A PRECAUTION OR IN SUPPORT.

ENDS

661. SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

REPEATED COLOMBO, ACCRA.

MY IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING TELEGRAM.

OMAN.

FOLLOWING IS TELEGRAM OF INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH IS BEING SENT TO BAHREIN.

BEGINS:-

I SHOULD PREFER THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE MADE AT LOCAL HEADQUARTERS AND ON THE FOLLOWING LINES:-

(A) THE SECOND STAGE OF THE OPERATION IS NOW APPROACHING.,

(B) THE SULTAN HAS DECIDED ON CERTAIN FORWARD MOVES.,

(C) THIS INVOLVES SOME BRITISH TROOPS ENTERING MUSCAT TERRITORY. THEIR ROLE WILL BE TO HOLD CERTAIN IMPORTANT PL+ POINTS THUS RELEASING LOCAL FORCES.

2. IF YOU FIND IT NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MEET HOSTILE QUESTIONING YOU MAY ALSO SAY THAT:-

(D) DELAY IN L+ CLEARING UP THE SITUATION IS IN THE INTERESTS OF NOBODY EXCEPT THOSE WHO HOPE TO BENEFIT BY STIRRING UP TROUBLE IN THIS AREA.,

(E) BRITISH TROOPS WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM MUSCAT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE OPERATION IS CONCLUDED.

3. PLEASE ENSURE THAT WE RECEIVE ADEQUATE WARNING OF TIME WHEN NEWS WILL BREAK. THIS SHOULD BE AS NEAR AS POSSIBLE TO THE TIME AT WHICH BRITISH TROOP MOVEMENTS WOULD IN ANY EVENT BECOME EVIDENT TO CORRESPONDENTS. BUT IN ANY CASE NOTHING MUST BE SAID BEFORE AUGUST 3RD.

4. PLEASE ALSO SEE MY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELEGRAM WHICH REPEATS FOREIGN OFFICE GUIDANCE TELEGRAM NO. 55

ENDS

MESSAGE ENDS VA

ENDS

195/2

Text of Commonwealth Relations Office Telegram Circular No. W.656 dated the 1st August, 1957.

OMAN

Following is full record of Mr. Suhrawardy's remarks on Oman to Commonwealth correspondents association on 30 July. Begins.

There is one question which has been asked which I think I ought to get out of the way namely regarding Oman and with which is linked a further question as to whether I intend to intervene between Saudi Arabia and Britain in order to bring about some kind of an understanding in relation to the Gulf disputes. Now let me tell you this as I have been saying over and over again that it is not an easy matter to intervene and I do not feel that I am important enough big enough or competent enough to do that. Intervention should only arise in those cases when the party intervening has the confidence of both the parties and has been requested by both the parties to intervene. No such request having come and I expect it will not come the question of intervention does not arise but I think I ought to dispel some kind of a misunderstanding. So far as I understand the Gulf disputes what are called Gulf disputes between Saudi Arabia and Britain can be so called correctly. In these disputes so far as I understand Britain is not the main party and if Britain is intervening it is intervening only because it has the responsibility for looking after the territorial integrity of certain of the Arab countries and what you call the disputes are really disputes between Arab countries in which Britain has had to take a part because some Arab countries have placed the responsibility for maintaining their territorial integrity in the hands of

Britain and are therefore not involved in any expenses for purposes of their own - of looking after their own territorial integrity.

I think it is a mistake to consider that the dispute is between Saudi Arabia and Britian as such. If Britain has intervened it has intervened on behalf of other Arab powers. On the question of Oman it seems that quite a great deal is being made out of it and here of course lies the deficiency if I may so call it on the part of the British administration to inform the world as to what is really the actual situation and what they are doing. Or perhaps if they have informed the world at large it seems that the papers have not understood the underlying reason for what is taking place and therefore have not looked at it from the proper perspective. So far as I can understand the case for Britain - is that they are responsible for maintaining as I have said the territorial integrity and the independence of the Sultan of Muscat. A small tribe in which not more than possibly 300 or 400 people are involved is raising its head and has captured certain key-points at a time when the Sultan of Muscat did not very much care about the safety of some of his domains because as I said earlier they have handed over their responsibility of maintaining their independence to Britain - have not taken upon themselves the defensive burdens of having an Army and a big security force. It would be something like as we find in other countries - I was almost giving a parallel regarding a neighbouring country but I won't do so because any such parallels are always likely to be misunderstood and there is nothing which is a real parallel there always is some deviation with regard to

incidents. It is something like a part of a country revolting against the main Government when it becomes the duty of the main Government to put down that revolt and if that main Government is under the suzerainty of another Government or has handed over the responsibility of putting down the revolt to that other Government that other Government is drawn into the fray. I think a great deal is being made out of this Oman dispute which is out of all proportion to the incident - it is not a dispute between great Arab powers with regard to Arab territories nor is the Arab world in any sense involved in this unless it is by means of tendentious propaganda which is meant to create more difficulties than it is worth. Ends.

SECRET

POL.144/1.

1952

TELEGRAM W NO. 660 SECRET IMMEDIATE

Repeated Colombo, Accra.

OMAN

My W No. 654 (to Delhi only) and your No. 885.

My two immediately following telegrams concern announcement to be made shortly about the use of British troops in Oman on probably August 3rd.

2. We have much in mind need to inform other Commonwealth Governments of this information at earliest possible moment. We shall be sending you instructions as to this by emergency telegram as soon as possible tomorrow morning 2nd August. It is however unlikely that we shall be able to authorise you to tell Commonwealth authorities before late afternoon (London time) tomorrow.

3. (To Delhi and Karachi) Will it be possible for you to arrange to inform Commonwealth authorities immediately thereafter.

SECRETARY OF STATE

SECRET

jl

Rm 11

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date August 2 1957

ME

Top British Soldier Visits Oman To Assess Military Aid

LONDON, August 1 (A.A.P.-Reuter).—The British Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Land Forces, Lieut.-General Sir Geoffrey Bourne, has arrived in Oman to investigate British military aid to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

The pro-British Sultan is fighting a rebellion led by the Imam (religious leader) of Oman.

General Bourne's movements are being kept secret.

The Sultan's Foreign Minister, Mr. Neil Innes, said yesterday that the Sultan is now preparing his next move against the rebels, following the surrender of the fort of Izki, about 50 miles south of the Nizwa headquarters of the Imam.

Mr. Innes said the Sultan's three northern armies are circling the rebels.

"I cannot see British ground forces taking part in operations in this area," he said.

Rallying Effect Of Demonstrations

Mr. Innes said that demonstrations of R.A.F. strength in the area had had an immediate rallying effect on waverers, "bringing them over to the Sultan's side."

This had happened despite Cairo Radio broadcasts which said Britain was finished after the Suez incident and would not come to the aid of the Sultan.

Asked if there was any evidence of outside assistance for the rebels, Mr. Innes said: "There certainly was evidence in 1955 (when the Imam led a revolt) that the Saudi Arabians were assisting discontented elements in this area with money and arms.

"Since then there has been nothing definite, but the dissidents are backed by Cairo Radio.

"We know there have been shipments of arms landed somewhere on the coast, south of Sohar, and two British frigates are now patrolling the coast."

GENERAL BOURNE

In Cairo last night the Arab League Secretariat said that member States of the League had been asked to give immediate aid to people of Oman who had "suffered from British aggression."

Mr. Innes said that Izki, the first rebel fort to be blasted by R.A.F. Venoms a week ago, had now surrendered.

R.A.F. Venoms based on Sharjah (in Trucial Oman) have now been ordered to halt rebel transport by motor vehicles, camels or donkeys.

Action against men and animals is to be limited to dummy attacks to frighten them, and motor transport may be attacked only after a dummy attack to ensure that vehicles have been evacuated.

The latest batch of air-dropped leaflets told the inhabitants that until they had "turned out the traitors Taleb and Ghaleb" (the Imam's brother and the Imam himself) no one was to move by day in an area including Bakhla, Nizwa, Tanuf, Shabat, Sait and Birkit al Muaz.

Venoms have made rocket and cannon strikes against Nizwa, Iski, Tanuf and Birkat al Muaz.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date August 2 1957

ME

115.

Shilly-shallying In Oman

That notorious trouble-maker and hater of the West, the Imam of the Yemen, has issued a call to arms to the Arab world. He urges all Arab countries to "hasten to help the people of Oman in their struggle against the British." This magnification of a tribal squabble into a national struggle against imperialism, which plays into the hands of Russia and the West's other enemies in the Middle East, and is causing the United States serious embarrassment, would never have been possible if Britain had acted as resolutely as the situation demanded.

The diplomatic hesitations, the silly local attempts at secrecy, the patent fears of estranging American opinion and the substitution of aerial demonstrations for decisive military action have defeated their own object. The whole thing could have been over, and the Sultan of Muscat's rightful authority re-established, in 48 hours if an adequate British force had been sent in straight away. Instead, it has been allowed to drag on, giving a field day to Cairo Radio propagandists who declaim that Britain is no longer willing or able to aid her friends in the Middle East, and opening for America the disagreeable and difficult prospect of increasing discords between her old ally, Britain, and her new friend, Saudi-Arabia.

A little extra bit of folly is now added by the solemn peregrination of the Commander-in-Chief of the British Land Forces in the Middle East to Muscat, "to discuss military measures." Here, indeed, is grist for hostile propaganda mills! If the Commander-in-Chief's presence is necessary to order a few companies to march to aid a friendly ruler to put down a tribal insurrection, something is surely seriously wrong. What, of course, is wrong is that everyone concerned is patently terrified of taking responsibility. Sir Geoffrey Bourne's presence not only flatters the Imam of the Oman; it gives him in the eyes of a world an importance he has never deserved.

It is time this timid shilly-shallying was replaced with a resolute military policy. At the present rate of progress, someone will bring the matter before the Security Council, and then the fat will really be in the fire. Meanwhile, Britain's prestige in the vital oil-bearing sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf — and further afield, too—is being diminished, and an unnecessary strain put on Anglo-American relations. It may be hoped that the Commander-in-Chief at any rate will be able to screw himself up to the pitch of dealing with the Imam and his scoundrelly brother as they should have been dealt with in the first place. After all, Britain has already crossed this pitiful Arabian Rubicon.

1951/2

Text of Commonwealth Relations Office Telegram Circular No. W.656 dated the 1st August, 1957.

OMAN

Following is full record of Mr. Suhrawardy's remarks on Oman to Commonwealth correspondents association on 30 July. Begins.

There is one question which has been asked which I think I ought to get out of the way namely regarding Oman and with which is linked a further question as to whether I intend to intervene between Saudi Arabia and Britain in order to bring about some kind of an understanding in relation to the Gulf disputes. Now let me tell you this as I have been saying over and over again that it is not an easy matter to intervene and I do not feel that I am important enough big enough or competent enough to do that. Intervention should only arise in those cases when the party intervening has the confidence of both the parties and has been requested by both the parties to intervene. No such request having come and I expect it will not come the question of intervention does not arise but I think I ought to dispel some kind of a misunderstanding. So far as I understand the Gulf disputes what are called Gulf disputes between Saudi Arabia and Britain can be so called correctly. In these disputes so far as I understand Britain is not the main party and if Britain is intervening it is intervening only because it has the responsibility for looking after the territorial integrity of certain of the Arab countries and what you call the disputes are really disputes between Arab countries in which Britain has had to take a part because some Arab countries have placed the responsibility for maintaining their territorial integrity in the hands of

Britain and are therefore not involved in any expenses for purposes of their own - of looking after their own territorial integrity.

I think it is a mistake to consider that the dispute is between Saudi Arabia and Britian as such. If Britain has intervened it has intervened on behalf of other Arab powers. On the question of Oman it seems that quite a great deal is being made out of it and here of course lies the deficiency if I may so call it on the part of the British administration to inform the world as to what is really the actual situation and what they are doing. Or perhaps if they have informed the world at large it seems that the papers have not understood the underlying reason for what is taking place and therefore have not looked at it from the proper perspective. So far as I can understand the case for Britain - is that they are responsible for maintaining as I have said the territorial integrity and the independence of the Sultan of Muscat. A small tribe in which not more than possibly 300 or 400 people are involved is raising its head and has captured certain key-points at a time when the Sultan of Muscat did not very much care about the safety of some of his domains because as I said earlier they have handed over their responsibility of maintaining their independence to Britain - have not taken upon themselves the defensive burdens of having an Army and a big security force. It would be something like as we find in other countries - I was almost giving a parallel regarding a neighbouring country but I won't do so because any such parallels are always likely to be misunderstood and there is nothing which is a real parallel there always is some deviation with regard to

incidents. It is something like a part of a country revolting against the main Government when it becomes the duty of the main Government to put down that revolt and if that main Government is under the suzerainty of another Government or has handed over the responsibility of putting down the revolt to that other Government that other Government is drawn into the fray. I think a great deal is being made out of this Oman dispute which is out of all proportion to the incident - it is not a dispute between great Arab powers with regard to Arab territories nor is the Arab world in any sense involved in this unless it is by means of tendentious propaganda which is meant to create more difficulties than it is worth. Ends.

MR. WHITE

J.C.G. KEVIN ESQ.,
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

With the Compliments
of the
Official Secretary

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom,
Canberra, A.C.T.

Copy to Mr Kevin DEA

1952

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE
TELEGRAM CIRCULAR W. NO.652, DATED
31st JULY, 1957.

My telegram Circular W. No.651.

OMAN

Following is text of Foreign Secretary's statement in House of Commons on 29th July. BEGINS.

1. It may be useful if I first give the House some more particulars of the background to the present situation.

2. The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman is an independent Sovereign State. In 1913 a religious dignitary known as the Imam led a revolt of some of the tribes in the interior but in 1920 an agreement was reached at a place called Sib under which the tribes were given some autonomy but the Sovereignty of the Sultan was recognised throughout the Sultanate.

3. This agreement was broken by the tribes in the year or two prior to December 1955 when the new Imam with foreign help sought to establish a separate principality. In December 1955 the Sultan took steps to reassert his authority and forces under his control entered the main inhabited centres of Oman meeting no resistance. The former Imam was allowed by the Sultan to live in his village against a guarantee of his good behaviour from a local Sheikh. His brother Talib escaped to Saudi Arabia

/and thence

and thence to Cairo.

4. Since that time an "Oman Imamate" office has been established in Cairo while Cairo radio disseminates pro Imam propaganda.

5. A month or two ago there was trouble with one tribal leader. The Sultan dealt with this successfully and the leader concerned surrendered on the fourteenth of June. On that same date Talib however the brother of the ex Imam is believed to have landed again in Muscat.

6. About the same time a quantity of arms including light machine guns and anti tanks mines was also landed. Talib set himself up in the mountain area north west of Nizwa and attracted to himself something like 200 followers. He then occupied certain villages some of which had fortifications. Loyal tribes sent to deal with Talib were unable to cope with automatic weapons and land mines and Talib's followers were able to inflict a reverse on the Sultan's forces backing the loyal tribes. This enabled Talib to persuade other local tribesmen to defect. In the primitive tribal society of the region without some active reaction from the Sultan or his friends there was always the possibility that disaffection might spread from tribe to tribe.

7. It was in these circumstances that on the evening of the 16th July the Sultan sent an appeal to Her Majesty's Government in the form of a letter to Her Majesty's Consul General in Muscat.

/8. The

8, The terms of the Sultan's letter were as follows

"You have full knowledge of the situation which has now developed at Nizwa and I feel the time has now come when I must request the maximum military and air support which our friend Her Britannic Majesty's Government can give in these circumstances as on those past occasions which have so cemented our friendship and for which I bear lasting gratitude. I shall be most deeply grateful if such assistance can be given again to restore the position and to prevent further loss of ground and loss of confidence.

Events are now moving so fast that I need hardly add that the speed with which support can be given will be vital to its value and I shall be very grateful if you will take up the matter with Her Britannic Majesty's Government accordingly."

9. The decision of Her Majesty's Government to give help to the Sultan was made for two reasons.

10. First it was at the request of a friendly ruler who had always relied on us to help him resist aggression or subversion.

11. Secondly there is the direct British interest involved and I have no need to stress to the House the importance of the Persian Gulf. In the Gulf we have certain formal and implicit obligations to the rulers of Sheikhdoms under our protection to protect them against attack. This is generally understood throughout the area and it has always been assumed that Her Majesty's Government would

/honour

honour Her obligations. The difference between a formal obligation and the obligations of a long standing relationship of friendship is not readily apparent to the local rulers and people. If we were to fail in one area it would begin to be assumed elsewhere that perhaps the anti-British propaganda of our enemies had some basis to it and that Her Majesty's Government were no longer willing or able to help their friends.

12. The present position is that Royal Air Force aircraft have taken limited action after due warning against certain military targets namely forts in the dissident area. They have also dropped leaflets on behalf of the Sultan and I am arranging for a summary of the contents of these to be circulated in the official report.

13. No United Kingdom ground forces have been engaged in operations but as a precaution our troops in the Persian Gulf area have been reinforced from Kenya. A detachment of the Cameronians is at Buraimi.

14. The Political Resident has reported that the rebellion has only small active tribal backing. The military operations are on a small scale. Casualties in the conflicts between the Sultan's forces and the rebel's have been very small indeed. There have been no casualties to British Forces reported. ENDS.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Canberra Times File No. 195/2

Published at Canberra Date. July 31 1957

ME

OMAN DISPUTE MAY BE PUT BEFORE U.N.

CAIRO, Tuesday (A.A.P.-Reuter).—Syria is considering bringing the Oman situation before the United Nations, it is reported here.

A Middle East news agency report last night quoted a Syrian Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying this in a declaration that Syria was "much concerned over the Oman situation" and the "continued brutal British aggression there."

Earlier reports reaching Beirut from Damascus quoted Syrian Foreign Minister, Salah Bitar, as telling reporters that the Imam of Oman, leader of the revolt against the pro-British Sultan of Muscat and Oman, had asked Syria for political, medical and material help.

When asked whether Syria would open offices for the registration of volunteers, he said, "Oman does not need men, but needs help of another kind."

The Syrian Government yesterday called on the Syrian Red Crescent Society—equivalent to the Red Cross—to provide immediate aid to Omanians.

R.A.F. Venom jet fighters yesterday launched rocket and cannon fire attacks on the rebel fort of Rirkat Al Nauz, about five miles east of Izki.

British United Press says the air attack, aimed at the rebel forces of the Imam of Oman, is expected to continue to-day.

A 48-hour leaflet warning preceded the attack by 10 Venoms, six more than in the previous sorties two days earlier. Considerable damage was inflicted on the walls of the fort, but there were no casualties reported.

No Obligation

In London, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, told the House of Commons that Britain's assistance to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman was as much a political as a military operation.

Britain was under no treaty obligation to help the sultan, and Mr. Lloyd reiterated the Government's decision has been made at the request of a friendly ruler.

Divided

Mr. Lloyd said that Britain had a direct interest because of the importance of the Persian Gulf.

In reply to questions, he said that the origin of the rebels' arms was not yet known.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Gaitskell, asked Mr. Lloyd if Britain was going to play any part in trying to achieve a political settlement?

In reply, Mr. Lloyd said, "There is a very complicated pattern of tribal loyalties which change almost overnight. Even within certain tribes, loyalties are divided.

"In fact, many members of the Imam's own family are loyal to the Sultan. It is not just a military operation, but one of trying to sort out the pattern of tribal loyalties and restoring the situation of 1955."

1952

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

UNCLASSIFIED

..:SS

I. 10644

Dated: 26th July, 1957

FROM:

Rec'd: 31st July, 1957
1330

External Affairs Office,
LONDON

SAV.EX.289. UNCLASSIFIED

Addressed Canberra Saving 289, repeated Washington Saving Ex 225.

From External.

Oman.

Following is summary of United Kingdom press comment on the rebellion in Oman and on the United Kingdom decision to come to the Sultan's aid:-

(a) The Times in its leader on 23rd July concluded that the real danger from the hostilities in Oman lay in the possibility that they might give the appearance of an Anglo-American rift and urged the need for co-ordination of policy with the United States. A further article on 24th July stressed the need to restore the Sultan's authority rapidly. Otherwise the trouble would spread to Buraimi and the Trucial States, endangering the United Kingdom position in the Persian Gulf and unsettling the Middle East "just at a time when it seemed to be gaining some stability."

(b) The Manchester Guardian on 24th July also stated that it would be regrettable if the conflict between the Imam and the Sultan lead to differences between United Kingdom and United States. Referring to United States policy the Guardian article argued against the wisdom of relying on any alliance with King Saud, in view of his irresponsibility and the characteristics of his regime. The article went on to question how long the anachronistic despotisms in the Gulf States could be expected to last and suggested that the United Kingdom should encourage the States to modernise the democratize themselves as the only way to stability in the area.

A special article in the Manchester Guardian on 25th July, under the heading: "Has Britain the Right to Fight?", refers to the short period during which the Sultan has had control over Oman and states that for thirty years until 1955 Oman was virtually independent. The article also suggests that the legality of the Sultan's resumption of control over Oman in 1955

/2.....

with United Kingdom assistance is open to doubt and questions whether the United Kingdom still has the right to protect its oil interests and to fulfil its obligations to the minor oligarchs in the area by force.

A further article on 26th July angued that the worst aspect of the Oman affair was that it showed how far the United Kingdom and the United States were from achieving a united policy in the Middle East and that it was dangerous for individual Western Powers to act as military patrons to individual Arab countries whose "friendship" they want on strategic or economic grounds.

(c) The Daily Telegraph editorial on 23rd July stated that the Oman incident emphasized the need for instant readiness of United Kingdom forces in the area. Any temporization over support for the Sultan lent a handle to Saudi Arabian and Egyptian propaganda and would spread dismay among the protected States of the Persian Gulf. A special article on 26th July referred to the need for close Anglo-American co-operation and a concerted effort to draw firm boundaries in the Arabian peninsula, in order to prevent outbreaks such as that at Oman.

(d) In an article in the Tribune of 26th July, Mr. A. Wedgwood Benn, the M.P. who has been prominent in Opposition criticism in Parliament of the Government attitude, questioned the legality of the United Kingdom's assistance to the Sultan on the grounds, put forward by Sir Hartley Shawcross in relation to Hungary, that: "It is well established in international law that intervention by a foreign power is inadmissable even if it takes place at the request of a Government engaged in suppressing an armed insurrection or in pursuance of a Treaty which is alleged to provide some justification..." In Mr. Benn's view the United Kingdom's oil interests could only be satisfactorily protected by agreements with the producers on modern lines (like that between Aramco and Saudi Arabia). In conclusion he stated that the "worst bypocrisy of all has been the failure to report the matter to the United Nations."

(e) The Daily Express on 23rd July regarded the need to preserve the United Kingdom position in the Persian Gulf as sufficient justification for the decision to come to the Sultan's aid. It referred to the dangerous delay in dealing with a "troublesome situation", and attributes this to the fact that the necessary transport aircraft could be secured only in the United Kingdom, not in Cyprus.

(f) The New Statesman of 27th July adopts a more moderate approach than that of Mr. Wedgwood Benn in the Tribune. After stating that if United Kingdom did not provide the rulers of the Gulf States with the support on which they feel they have a right to count, the rulers may come to terms with King Saud, with consequences for the Sterling Area which could be disastrous, the New Statesman article goes on to say that in Oman the United Kingdom is not supporting the most reactionary forces: in comparison with the feudal tyranny in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States are enlightened Welfare States. The article makes the point that the United Kingdom action will nevertheless have the effect of jeopardizing any possibility of rapprochement between the United Kingdom and the Arab States and that there is danger that a

/3.....

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. U N C L A S S I F I E D

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

I. 10644

guerilla war will develop in Oman, in which the United Kingdom will become indefinitely and increasingly involved. The article concludes by saying that what is to be questioned is not so much the use of force but the policy as a result of which force was used. The granting of independence to India, the striking of oil and the growth of Arab nationalism make a reformulation of United Kingdom policy necessary in the Persian Gulf.

(g) The Economist of this week was not available to us at the time of despatch.

MIN & DEPT EA
MIN & DEPT DEFENCE

31st July, 1957

SEC A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA EAF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P

G

195/2

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

UNCLASSIFIED.

I.10643

Sent: 26th July, 1957.
Rec'd: 31st July, 1957.
1330

BH

FROM:

External Affairs Office,
LONDON.

Sav Ex 288. UNCLASSIFIED.

Repeated Australian Embassy, Washington No.Ex224.

From External.

Oman.

The following telegram of 24th July from the United Kingdom Embassy at Beirut gives a round-up of Lebanese Press reactions:-

"News of the revolt first appeared in papers of July 20. Over the weekend papers carried Agency reports to the effect that Britain accused King Saud, Aramco and Egypt of having instigated the revolt, that the R.A.F. was ready to intervene. Today's newspapers report that the R.A.F. has given the rebels an ultimatum to withdraw from the places they have occupied, under penalty of being bombed. Siyassah (Arab Nationalist) says "brutal" bombing has actually begun.

Comment has not been copious to date. As was to be expected, such comment as has appeared is unfavourable to the United Kingdom. The Arabic Press falls between hailing the revolt as a blow against British imperialism (the more extreme papers), and criticizing British intervention in a dispute between Arabs. In a violent article on July 23, Beirut El Massa linked the revolt with other uprisings against British imperialism, declared that interest in oil lay behind British determination to retain contro of Oman, and said that the Arab States should help the rebels with arms and volunteers. Hayat welcomes all such signs of Arab awakening. Beirut and other newspapers suggest that Britain, like Israel, is working against the Arabs. The French-language Press have so far concentrated upon the wider political implications of the dispute and speculate about the extent of American support for King Saud.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE

31st July, 1957.

SEC A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA EAF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P
G.

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

..:VA

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

I. 10642

195/2

Sent: 26th July, 1957

Rec'd: 31st July, 1957
1330

FROM:

Australian Affairs Office,
LONDON.

Repeated Australian Embassy, Washington No. EX223.

SAV. EX287. CONFIDENTIAL.

Oman.

The following telegram of 23rd July from the United Kingdom Ambassador at Rome is of interest:-

"When we were discussing the Oman situation in the light of your statement in Parliament of 22nd July, the Director-General of Political Affairs said to me that the Italian Government were slightly preoccupied on two points. The first, that the matter could be represented inside Italy as Anglo-American rivalry in the Middle East, and secondly, that the affair might offer an opportunity for Nasser to heal the breach between Egypt and Saudi-Arabia.

As regards the first, I said that on such occasions the United States Government were always embarrassed by the individual views and strong pressure of the oil companies. But I felt sure that Her Majesty's Embassy in Washington were in close contact with the State Department on the subject. From both points of view which he had mentioned to me, it seemed desirable that the United States should counsel moderation to the Saudi Arabians. I suggested that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs might care to make their own views known to the Americans."

- - - - - - - - - - - -

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE

31st July, 1957.

SEC A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM SA AM&SP EAF&ME E AF&ME
INF DL MT C&P S&SEA

G

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

195/2

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

AMENDED COPY. I.10590

Sent: 30th July, 1957.
1233
Rec'd: 31st July, 1957.
0830

SS/BH

FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

877. CONFIDENTIAL.

Repeated London 112.

Oman.

Newsom said today there had been no further developments in United States attitude on the Oman situation beyond that given in our telegram 833. However he told us in confidence that the State Department had now replied to "various British

x- communications" to the effect that while the United States appreciated the nature of British relations with the Sultan and appreciated that the United Kingdom was well aware of the need to take cognisance of Oman in general context of status of the West in the Middle East Affairs they hoped that the present difficulties could be ended ✱ expeditiously and that a solution could be found on the lines of reaching an understanding with Saudi Arabia.

2. Asked whether the State Department believed that the Oman Affair could in fact be wound up quickly Newsom said he doubted this. He pointed out that at the beginning the Sultan's forces had folded up quickly and he did not see that air attacks could have the effect of bringing these forces together again and in particular persuading deserters to return.

3. Newsom admitted there was a difference of opinion between the United States and United Kingdom on Saud's territorial ambitions. The State Department felt that Saud, who had spent his life fighting trible wars, did not think of 'sovereignty' in Western sytle, but that it was natural for him to respond to appeals for help sent to him by tribal leaders. The Oman affair could appear to him as primarily an 'Arab' Affair rather than one involving a contest with the United Kingdom on a matter of sovereinty.

4. Newsom said that neither Saudi Arabia nor Egypt had made representations to the State Department. He understood that Saud at this time was on his yacht somewhere in the Red Sea.

5. We asked Newsom whether Oman was one of the reasons for Dulles' present trip to London. Newsom said that he had been asked to prepare a background paper for Dulles on Oman and Muscat in case this subject came up, but he was told that disarmament was the principal reason for Dulles' visit. He did not doubt however, that Dulles would discuss Oman with Selwyn Lloyd if the opportunity arose.

(✱ amedment)

CONFIDENTIAL 31st July, 1957.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE
P.M.'S.
SEC. A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA. SA EAF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P G.

AUSTRALIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
LONDON, W.C.2.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
31 JUL 1957
CANBERRA.

1957.

File No:

Memo. No: 1108.

Memorandum for: The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs
Canberra, A.C.T.

I enclose herewith for your information press cutting from Tribune.
newspaper of 26th July, 1957. concerning
Oman

G.B. Forbes
for Senior External Affairs Representative

GR

GBF

Extract from "TRIBUNE" 26th July, 1957.

Jets in action against tribesmen

THIS SMELLS LIKE INVASION

says

ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN

ALL this week the newspapers have been building up the new "crisis" in exactly the right way to excite the public interest. "Britons in desert fort seige," "R.A.F. strikes in Oman today," "Cameronians flown to Persian Gulf." So run the headlines. The sound of editorial trumpets at this unexpected Kipling festival has been almost deafening. The Sultan is our brave ally facing a rebellion by a cunning opponent—a fanatical spiritual leader. It reads like a film script.

But it is not. British pilots *are* in action dropping leaflets and making low-level rocket attacks. Bombers *are* ready. The Cyprus base *is* in use. Troops in Kenya *are* being flown to reinforce the local levies.

There *may* be British casualties. There will *certainly* be casualties among the tribesmen, most of whom cannot read the leaflets telling them to get away before the bombing begins. Why is all this happening?

Selwyn Lloyd explained it in the House of Commons: "We have had friendly treaty relations with the Sultan and his predecessors for the past 150 years. We are giving the full support which we think a staunch friend requires." He could give no assurance that Parliament would be told before our forces were engaged. Only military targets would be attacked.

Not since Suez

These noble sentiments immediately rang the bell on the Tory benches. Not since Suez has he got such a cheer. And having thus disposed of the complexities of the matter in two sentences, the Foreign Secretary more or less invited us to go ahead and enjoy the spectacle of Britain being tough.

BUT, of course, the real story is much more complicated.

The first British contact with that south eastern tip of Arabia was in the agreement of 1798, signed between the Imam and the East India Company.

Two years later, in 1800, the Imam agreed that "an English gentleman of respectability on the part of the Company shall always reside at Muscat." He was given the sole right to conduct foreign relations. It is his successor who has now ordered in the jets.

So, as the years passed, more treaties were signed.

Meanwhile there was always trouble. Regularly over the years the British Government picked the Sheik they thought most reliable and backed him against his rivals with all the solemn humbug that we saw on Monday.

Unfortunately this pattern of tribal rivalry, underwritten by imperialist patronage, is now being conducted in a much more dangerous world. The prizes, too, are much more valuable.

ONE new element to be considered is Saudi Arabian expansion. King Saud has long wanted to drive the foreigners out of the peninsula and acquire full control of the richest oil deposits in the world. This is the most likely cause of the trouble now. The Imam has found that it suited his book to call in the King.

Then, there are the oil companies. The Iraq Petroleum Company operates in Oman and is a big producer of sterling oil. ARAMCO in Arabia is also interested.

But it would be a great mistake to think that ARAMCO is acting as an independent agent in this struggle. Its influence is much more likely to be indirect. King Saud's income comes from ARAMCO royalties. ARAMCO'S concession depends on King Saud's support. But the King is the man who takes the initiative.

These elements must be separated again from the interests of the American Government. As compared with Britain, America has got her Middle Eastern Oil on clearer terms; in other words, she has not depended on the ramshackle structure of political residents and protectorates.

She has tried to maintain relations with King Saud more or less on a basis of equality. The price to be paid for this generosity is the obscene spectacle of the Slave King being feted in Washington.

This relationship has been underlined by the Eisenhower doctrine. America is now less free to offend her anti-Communist Arab supporters than she was twelve months ago. For Mr. Dulles, King Saud is doing a favour by accepting American arms.

Nobody knows

It would, therefore, be quite false to suppose that the Saudis would jump at a word of command from Washington. American influence there may be. But it is naive to imagine that Anglo-American agreement is all that is needed to cure this ulcer.

Another element must concern us. What about the people who live in this area? What do they think about it? Nobody knows or seems to care.

No doubt it would be a mistake to think that the Imam—a discontented and displaced chieftain—is leading a popular liberation movement. But one day there will be a popular movement.

THE main question remains. What should Britain do now?

Some Socialists seem tempted to see Selwyn Lloyd as a hero, leading us into battle against the Eisenhower doctrine. That is bunk. Others say: "This is all very well, but if it is British Oil companies versus American oil companies I know where I stand."

But it isn't any good closing our eyes while the guns of the R.A.F. do their work—hoping it will be all over quickly. The legal position cannot be ignored.

In an article on Hungary in *The Times*, on March 13, Sir Hartley Shawcross dealt with this in one sentence of absolute clarity.

"... It is well established in international law that intervention by a foreign power is inadmissible even if it takes place at the request of a Government engaged in suppressing an armed insurrection or in pursuance of a Treaty which is alleged to provide some justification. ..."

What about the so-called realists who are urging that Britain must defend her friends and her oil? The simple answer is that no good can come from this to our own prestige.

Make it clear

It's no good mumbling: "Oil is vital ... Oil is vital ... Oil is vital"—as if that was an answer and a justification. The more vital the oil the more important it is to get it guaranteed by a modern agreement.

Finally, there can be no real security for our oil until we are dealing with the people in the area from which the oil comes.

Britain must make it clear, once new oil agreements are negotiated, that she proposes to limit her role to that required by the Charter of the United Nations in protecting an ally against foreign attack.

Perhaps the worst hypocrisy of all has been the failure to report the matter to the United Nations. This is a dispute and should be settled peacefully. If we really hope to liquidate the quasi-colonialism that exists in the Middle East we must be ready to invite international action to guarantee our legitimate interests.

AUSTRALIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
LONDON, W.C.2.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
31 JUL 1957
CANBERRA

1957

File No: 1107

Memo. No:

Memorandum for: The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs
Canberra, A.C.T.

I enclose herewith for your information press cutting from Manchester Guardian newspaper of 25 July 1957 concerning Oman

G.B. Bates

for Senior External Affairs Representative

GR.

THIS IMAGE IS REPRODUCED FROM A DAMAGED PAGE
WITH A PORTION OF THE INFORMATION MISSING.

GBF Extract from "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" 25th July, 1957.

HAS BRITAIN THE RIGHT TO FIGHT?

Protecting oil interests against the Americans

BY JAMES MORRIS

By the turbulent standards of the region nothing very remarkable is happening in Muscat and Oman. The tribal leaders of the mountainous interior are asserting their time-honoured privilege of rebelling against the Sultan's rule. The Sultan is benefiting from his long-standing friendly relationship with Britain, who (as on several previous occasions) is intervening in South-east Arabia to bolster the Sultan's authority and her own unwritten suzerainty. It is only the international complications of the matter which distinguish it from the innumerable forgotten altercations of Omani history.

The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman is divided into three very distinct regions. The two coastal provinces of Muscat and Dhufar are nowadays firmly under the Sultan's control (though Britain once had to intervene to recover Dhufar, which had impertinently seceded, and sometimes rebel leaders have hammered at the stout medieval gates of Muscat itself.) The mountainous interior, however, has always been racked by turmoil and has often thrown off Muscat's hegemony altogether. Affairs there are complicated by tribal rivalries of baffling haziness, by the isolated and rugged nature of the country, and by the religious fierceness and chauvinism of the inhabitants.

Previous history

Until last year this region was frankly outside the Sultan's control. Some would say he had no administrative rights there. Certainly he had never visited the region or its celebrated capital, Nizwa. Since the end of last century Oman (as the interior is loosely called) had been beyond the reach of the Sultan's writ. In 1913 there had been a tribal rebellion—comparable perhaps to the one that is happening now—which was only quelled with British help. The treaty that ended it is called the Treaty of Sib and was interpreted by some observers as granting virtual autonomy to the signatory tribes of the interior.

So for thirty years Oman remained virtually independent and almost unvisited by Westerners. It had its own religio-political leader, a theoretically elected functionary called the Imam of Oman. The Sultan collected no taxes, provided no administrators, and never ventured to cross the mountains that divide Muscat from Oman. In the course of time the Omanis, egged on by Egypt and Saudi Arabia, cherished ambitions of even more complete autonomy; and in this they were encouraged by the fact that on the edge of Omani territory, not far from the constantly disputed oasis of Buraimi, prospectors from a predominantly British oil company were working on a concession from the Sultan.

Sterling interests

It was then, in 1955, that the affairs of Oman became interlinked with the wider issues of the Middle East. It was suggested that the Sultan had no right to grant a concession for the whole of Muscat and Oman, since this clashed with the precepts of the Treaty of Sib. The Saudi Arabians, sometimes helped by the gullibility and cupidity of the Americans, revived their old claims to the coastal areas of the Arabian Peninsula and supported the Imam of Oman in his demands for complete independence. There was the notorious Anglo-Saudi clash over Buraimi, partly prompted by the fear that any oil in the area might be denied to sterling interests if the Saudis and their American backers had their way. The pretensions of the Imam of Oman were seen as a threat to British interests, yet another [illegible] from of the ur[illegible] alliance between King Saud and Colonel Nasser.

So, at the end of 1955, the Sultan, firmly backed by the British, sent his forces into Oman, removed the Imam and his spirited brother Talib, demanded the allegiance of the tribes, and united the Sultanate at last. Some people thought this was a little illegal, but it was done swiftly, efficiently, and bloodlessly. The oil prospectors were able to get on with their work peacefully (though they still have not found any oil). The Imam was put on good behaviour and allowed to stay in his own village. Talib ran away to Saudi Arabia. All the chiefs of the interior, some of them foxy and unfathomable beyond belief, cautiously paid court to the Sultan. For the first time in this century the Sultan was able to visit the interior, and Muscat and Oman, the third largest State in Arabia, was a political entity.

Arms from Saudi Arabia

For some months now there have been rumours that some of the mountain chieftains have been restless. Money and arms have been seeping through from Saudi Arabia by land and by sea. The old antipathies have been, as is usual in Oman, slowly reviving. Nobody who has studied the history of Oman, however superficially, will be surprised to find that after less than two years of control from Muscat the Imam, Talib, Suleiman bin Hamyar, Mohammed bin Issa, and the other old hoaries of the interior are on the rampage again.

It would be comical were it not for the complications of the rebellion. In spite of the cartelisation of oil prospecting, British and American oil interests are at odds in Oman. Moreover, while Britain is suzerain of the Persian Gulf principalities along the shore, the United States is the patron of Saudi Arabia, which makes things awkward for the alliance. The whole question of undemarcated frontiers arises, and all the old agonising problems of international morality in the Middle East.

Forces of progress

In essence, however, the issues are the same as those that have animated recent British actions in the Aden Protectorate. Britain still has certain interests in the Arabian peninsula, chiefly concerning oil. She also has certain obligations towards various minor oligarchs, admittedly feudal in temper, who rule the southern and eastern coasts of Arabia. Has she the right to protect those interests by force? Is it still her duty, in a topsy-turvy world, to protect those old-fashioned associates against inimical forces, both traditional and progressive? In short, is there still a place for the British policeman in the Middle East?

The interest of the Omani situation lies, therefore, not in the wild goings-on of the tribesmen, who have been behaving like this since time immemorial, but in the Anglo-American attitudes. If Washington backs King Saud and his puppets in this squabble it may well be the beginning of the end of the British position in Arabia. But, like everything in the Arab world, it is a shadowy, hazy, muffled affair: nothing is absolutely black or absolutely white. As one of those meaningless Arabic proverbs might put it, a hasty conclusion is worse than a three-legged camel.

AUSTRALIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
LONDON, W.C.2.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
31. JUL 1957
CANBERRA.

1957.

File No:

Memo. No: 1106

Memorandum for: The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs
Canberra, A.C.T.

I enclose herewith for your information press cutting from **Manchester Guardian.** newspaper of **26th July, 1957.** concerning Oman

G.B. Isaac

for Senior External Affairs Representative

GR

GBF Extract from "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" 26th July, 1957.

Ghostly Conflict

The fighting in Oman seems to be about as metaphorical as the black eye which Mr Bevan proposes to give the Conservatives. Operations are, in Mr Lloyd's words, "limited," and news of what the Sultan, the Imam, the Saudi Arabians, and the British are up to is even more limited. The conflict itself pretty obviously amounts to no more than the tribal intrigues and revolts which have troubled Oman many times before and which Britain has helped to put down. As Mr Lloyd admitted yesterday the ostensible grounds for British aid to the Sultan are custom and "friendship" rather than any specific obligation. (Nobody asked him outright about the Treaty of Sib and the possible claims to autonomy of the interior). All this was passable enough when others were content to leave Oman in obscurity. But that time is gone by. Hence Mr Lloyd's embarrassed reluctance to say straight out that what concerns the Government in this dispute is—still more than the chances of striking oil in Oman—the effect on the other territories along the Persian Gulf where our oil interests are already vast. It is a ghostly conflict and some of the main participants, like Saudi Arabia with its long-standing territorial ambitions, stand wrapped in desert dust some way off. The worst of it is that the affair shows how far Britain and the United States still are from achieving a united policy in the Middle East. The State Department is keeping at a careful distance. We may also see how dangerous it is for individual Western Powers to act as military patrons to individual Arab countries whose "friendship" they want on strategic or economic grounds. After Suez every slight tribal clash resounds throughout the area and awakens thoughts of wider conflict even though no one makes an overt move.

Middle Eastern oil has intruded on international politics in another place. In Israel people are blaming on British policy the decision of the Shell and British Petroleum companies to dispose of their oil marketing interests there. The Israelis are naturally sensitive to anything that looks like an acceptance by Western firms or countries of the Arab boycott. The two oil companies, which have not yet decided whether to give up their interest in the Haifa refinery as well as in the marketing of oil, say that they have been moved by commercial reasons. That may well be true, though we need more information than has been published before we can be sure that it is the whole truth. For companies like these the refining and marketing of oil in Israel must anyhow be a marginal affair. Though their decision may be taken on economic grounds it is likely to have political consequences. The Arabs may be encouraged in their—now slightly flagging—belief that pressure on the West can help their boycott of Israel and eventually wipe the intruder off the map. The British Government may find that a decision with which it probably had nothing to do—although it cannot escape some responsibility, since it holds a controlling interest in B.P.—is attributed in the Middle East to what people are pleased to call its deep-laid policy. The incident shows once again how precarious is the management of oil resources in the Middle East when every move has a bearing on the area's conflicts. It seems to call for a fuller explanation than has so far been given.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
31 JUL 1957
1957
CANBERRA.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE.

File No. 3/12/65/2

25/7/57

Memo. No. 1105

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

I enclose herewith for your information extracts from the House of Commons Hansard of **22nd.July 1957** being column(s) **Vol.574, No.146** concerning **Central Oman (Disturbances)**

E.B. Fowles
for EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICER.

Refs. [illegible]

GR

CONFIDENTIAL

1952

VA.MMc DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. I.10596

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

Dated: 30th July 1957
1950
Rec'd: 31st July 1957
0830

FROM:

Australian High Commission,
L O N D O N.

1808. CONFIDENTIAL.

Repeated New York 134 (Please pass to Washington 160).

From External.

Oman.

The reaction of the Iranians, expressed to the United Kingdom Ambassador Teheran, has been one of fear of a "second Suez" whose disruptive pressure might prove too much for the Baghdad Pact. At first they hoped the subject might be kept out of the United Nations but they have now suggested to the United Kingdom that the United Kingdom or a friendly neutral might refer to the United Nations before Egypt, Syria or Saudi Arabia does. Iranian press comment is becoming anti-United Kingdom with comparisons with Russian intervention in Hungary.

2. The Iraqis have informed the United Kingdom of a Syrian enquiry whether Iraq would participate in a conference to discuss the Oman question. The Iraqis hope to stall as long as possible. The Prime Minister in a public statement said the Iraqis following the situation in Oman and endeavouring to collect information which would enable it to decide attitude. The United Kingdom Ambassador believes that if fighting continues long enough for the Iraqi press campaign to develop the Iraqis will take up an anti-United Kingdom position in response to Nationalist public opinion and to preserve relations with Saud.

3. Syria is also taking the lead in seeking to obtain a declaration in relation to Oman by Arab countries and some Asian countries with a view to delivery to the United Kingdom delegation New York. India was approached but was not prepared to subscribe. New York may be aware of details.

4. Savingram follows.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE.
P.M.'s.

31st July, 1957.

SEC A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA E.AF&ME
E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P

G

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

1952.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

I.10590

Sent: 30th July, 1957.
1233
Rec'd: 31st July, 1957.
0830

SS/BH

FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

877. CONFIDENTIAL.

Repeated London 112.

Oman.

Newsom said today there had been no further developments in United States attitude on the Oman situation beyond that given in our telegram 833. However he told us in confidence that the State Department had now replied to 'various British

(50 groups missing)

expeditiously and that a solution could be found on the lines of reaching an understanding with Saudi Arabia.

2. Asked whether the State Department believed that the Oman Affair could in fact be wound up quickly Newsom said he doubted this. He pointed out that at the beginning the Sultan's forces had folded up quickly and he did not see that air attacks could have the effect of bringing these forces together again and in particular persuading deserters to return.

3. Newsom admitted there was a difference of opinion between the United States and United Kingdom on Saud's territorial ambitions. The State Department felt that Saud, who had spent his life fighting trible wars, did not think of 'sovereignty' in Western sytle, but that it was natural for him to respond to appeals for help sent to him by tribal leaders. The Oman affair could appear to him as primarily an 'Arab' Affair rather than one involving a contest with the United Kingdom on a matter of sovereinty.

4. Newsom said that neither Saudi Arabia nor Egypt had made representations to the State Department. He understood that Saud at this time was on his yacht somewhere in the Red Sea.

5. We asked Newsom whether Oman was one of the reasons for Dulles' present trip to London. Newsom said that he had been asked to prepare a background paper for Dulles on Oman and Muscat in case this subject came up, but he was told that disarmament was the principal reason for Dulles' visit. He did not doubt however, that Dulles would discuss Oman with Selwyn Lloyd if the opportunity arose.

CONFIDENTIAL 31st July, 1957.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE
P.M.'S.
SEC A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA. SA EAF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P G.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper: The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2.

Published at: Sydney Date: July 30 1957

ME

DULLES' LONDON TRIP MAY BE TO AVERT BREACH OVER OMAN

LONDON, July 29 (A.A.P.).—The real reason for the London visit by the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. John Foster Dulles, is the rebellion in Oman, British and French newspapers report today.

The "Daily Mail" says that Mr. Dulles, who is due to arrive tonight, will try to prevent a rift between Britain and America over Britain's aid to the Sultan of Oman.

The United States is giving military and economic aid to Saudi Arabia, which is reported to be backing the Oman rebels.

The officially announced reason for Mr. Dulles' visit is to make a personal review of the U.N. Disarmament Sub-committee's talks in London.

Vital To U.K. Oil Interests

The "Daily Mail" says: "The American view is that British policy in Oman and nearby Buraimi clashes with President Eisenhower's plan to encourage King Saud of Saudi Arabia to oppose Egypt's Colonel Nasser.

"The United States is urging Britain to recognise King Saud's claims to oil-rich Buraimi. The British view is that failure to stand by her commitments towards Oman and Buraimi would undermine the whole of her oil interests in the Persian Gulf."

[Buraimi lies on the borders of Oman, Trucial Oman, and Saudi Arabia.]

The "Daily Express" says that in Washington U.S. officials expect Mr. Dulles to discuss the Oman dispute with the British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Macmillan, and the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd.

"The Times" says: "The Oman rising has shown the obvious need for discussion at the highest level of the relations of the United States and Britain to Saudi Arabia and the small sheikdoms on the Persian Gulf."

Feeling That Eden Misled

The "New York Times" chief London correspondent says that when Mr. Dulles arrives in London he will encounter a new political atmosphere.

He says that the British Government's attitude is coloured by two sentiments that have assumed the strength of tradition in the Conservative Party.

The first is that Mr. Dulles misled Sir Anthony Eden and his Cabinet last September over the amount of support the U.S. administration would put behind the Suez Canal Users' Association.

The second is that Mr. Dulles has been, at best, indifferent and, at worst, hostile to the maintenance of Britain's interests in the Middle East.

After the Suez crisis, says the correspondent, British ministers found it hard to believe that Mr. Dulles accepted the importance of the Anglo-U.S. alliance to the extent that they did, or that he cared very much for Britain's goodwill.

Conflicting reports on the situation in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman came today from Shahjah, the British base in Trucial Oman.

Reuters quotes the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Sir Bernard Burrows, as saying that the uprising—at the moment—has lost momentum, and no ground contact with the rebels is planned.

However, British United Press says that British troops are moving inland to the Buraimi Oasis, which will be the advanced operational headquarters for an expected ground assault against the rebels.

According to Sir Bernard, the rebels are now confined to an area of about 15 to 25 miles around Nizwa.

AUSTRALIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
LONDON, W.C.2.

195/2

24th July, 1957

File No: 3/12/65/2

Memo. No: 1095/57.

Memorandum for: The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs
Canberra, A.C.T.

I enclose herewith for your information press cutting from "Manchester Guardian" newspaper of 24th July, 1957 concerning Oman and the West.

E.B. Feakes
(G. B. Feakes)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

GBF Extract from "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" 24th July, 1957.

Oman and the West

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman is seeking to reimpose his authority over territory on which two years ago he had never set foot. Britain has obligations to him, and his fellow-rulers in Eastern Arabia will watch curiously to see how they are carried out. His cause is not of a kind to excite a crusading fever in this country. A campaign on his behalf could hardly be justified as a war to make the world safe for democracy. It will be regrettable, too, if his disagreement with the Imam of Oman leads to strain between Britain and America; whatever his personal merits (and they appear to be considerable), there have been weightier matters to differ about. Mr Selwyn Lloyd at any rate is feeling embarrassed, as his evasions in the Commons showed; if he had shown the same reluctance last summer to be rude to Colonel Nasser as he was yesterday even to name King Saud, these new worries might never have come upon him. But Mr Dulles should be feeling still more abashed. When one has allies like King Saud—even for the best of anti-Communist reasons—one must be prepared for unpleasantnesses. One argument against giving him arms is that he is most likely to use those he has for such purposes as blockading the Gulf of Aqaba and helping the Imam of Oman to rebel. And he has made no secret of other aims—to see the end of Israel and to recover the Buraimi Oasis. Long before oil was discovered, it was a dynastic ambition of the Saudis to bring the whole of the Arabian peninsula under their sway; the Buraimi claims and the present trouble in Oman are no doubt two steps on the way. The Americans cannot be blamed for having divided minds about such policies; apart from their eagerness not to offend the most powerful supporter of the Eisenhower doctrine in the area their oil industry stands to benefit from any additional territory over which he can establish his rule. But they may learn, as Britain has, that the sands of Arabia are a treacherous foundation for foreign policy.

But the fighting in Oman has lessons for us too. Britain first became interested in Oman and the Trucial Coast in the early years of the nineteenth century; the British East India Company made expeditions to put down pirates. As the century went on British control was strengthened by a number of treaties, but these again were mainly to protect the Indian Empire and its communications and to make sure that other empires did not gain a foothold. The interior of the country was relatively unimportant, and since rule was over tribes rather than territory frontiers went undemarcated. The discovery of oil has changed all that; the most forbidding and remote patch of desert may make its owner one of the richest men in the world. Yet, in spite of efforts to fix them by negotiation, penetration, or force, frontiers in the interior remain undemarcated, and the treaties binding Britain and the Arab rulers remain on the same pattern as when they were concluded, to meet quite other conditions, in the nineteenth century. The social systems of the sheikhdoms are as old-fashioned, and although some of the despotisms are as benevolent as any in the world and far richer than others, they are an anachronism; no one can prophesy—the Middle East being in its present turmoil—how long they can survive. If Britain, as their ally or protector, could encourage them—perhaps in federation—to modernise and democratise themselves with the single-mindedness that India is showing, then incidents like the Imam's revolt would not occur; and no better way could be found of checking the territorial ambitions of states in which slave-owning survives.

SECRET POL.144/1

J.C.G. Kevin, Esq.,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

With the Compliments

of the

Official Secretary

ENC:1 Copy each of telegrams re OMAN, From Commonwealth Relations Office.
Nos.638, 644, 645, 647 & 648.

30th July, 1957.

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom,
Canberra, A.C.T.

CONFIDENTIAL 1952

CONFIDENTIAL.

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM
CIRCULAR W. NO. 638. DATED 25TH JULY, 1957.

My telegram Circular W. No. 631.

OMAN.

Following is text of Foreign Office telegram No. 48 Guidance.

Suggestions in the foreign press and elsewhere that developments in Oman are due to a clash between British and United States oil interests are wholly baseless and may be discredited at every opportunity. In reply to a Press Question on 23rd July the Foreign Office spokesman stated that we disassociated ourselves from reports alleging the complicity of American oil interests in the disturbances in Central Oman.

2. You can also point out that

(a) in the Iraq Petroleum Company which has been prospecting in the interior of Muscat and Oman there is a substantial American shareholding divided equally between the two American companies Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony Mobil;

(b) these two American companies between them own 40 percent of Aramco.

3. On 23rd July a State Department spokesman is reported to have described as "absolutely baseless" charges that British and American oil companies were working against each other in the Arabian Peninsula and that it is "hogwash" to suggest that there was any rivalry between the British and American companies.

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

Text of Commonwealth Relations Office telegram addressed to United Kingdom High Commissioner Karachi No. W.644 dated 27th July, 1957, repeated to United Kingdom High Commissioner Canberra.

OMAN.

My immediately preceding telegram.

Following is text of Foreign Office telegram No. 1575 addressed to Amman.

Please inform the Government to which you are accredited that British action in responding to the appeal of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman involves the following main considerations

(A) There is a long-standing friendship between Her Majesty's Government and the Sultans of Muscat. We intend to be loyal to our friends and to stand by them in their time of difficulty.

(B) The whole revolt and the consequent military action is on a far smaller scale than Cairo propaganda would lead people to believe. Casualties have been negligible and the area involved relatively small. The measures that have been authorised are not on a large scale and our intention is not to shed blood of Arabs but rather to keep bloodshed to a minimum by bringing the revolt to a standstill.

(C) An aspect of the matter about which we are most concerned is that these events should not be used by the Communists and their Egyptian allies to draw King Saud back into the Egyptian orbit. It is for this reason that despite political pressure in the United Kingdom Her Majesty's Government have refused publicly to condemn the Saudis though we know full well that they are at least partly responsible for events. We believe that there is an Egyptian adviser with the rebels.

2. You should go on to show that we should be grateful if the Government to which you are accredited could use any means at their disposal to let King Saud know that we remain anxious for the restoration of the old friendship between our two countries and

SECRET

and that we for our part do not desire that the Oman episode should delay this process. We are anxious to play the matter down and we hope that there is a corresponding desire on King Saud's part not to turn present events into an issue of Arabs against the West.

3. You should also say that the disturbances in Oman are particularly disappointing because we have recently been considering how to promote a reconciliation between King Saud and the Sultan. If you think that it would be useful you have discretion to say that we do not know whether King Saud himself was aware of the degree to which his subordinates were involved in intrigues in Oman and that the present trouble may be of their making and not his.

4. A similar telegram is being sent to Karachi.

SECRET

SECRET

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM CIRCULAR W. NO.645. DATED 26TH JULY. 1957.

My telegram circular W. No. 630.

OMAN

Authority has now been given for the taking of measures designed to prevent movement by day in the dissident areas. The whole of Oman would be closed to motor transport. Certain selected roads and tracks and a small area around the rebel strongholds would be closed to all movements. Full warning of this action would be given by leaflets. Our aims are to

(A) prevent the rebels using the vehicles in their possession

(B) prevent the possibility of further offensive action by the rebels

(C) assist the naval and land blockade to prevent smuggling of arms into the dissident area and to prevent arms from being moved within that area

(D) isolate the villages and to hinder communications throughout the rebel area

(E) give a further visible and outward sign that the Sultan can exercise his authority over the region.

2. This control would be exercised by air action and pilots would be briefed not to shoot to kill unless the personnel concerned were in vehicles or were clearly dissident tribesmen taking hostile action. By this means there would be no risk to the lives of noncombatants.

SECRET

3. It is incorrect to refer to the Oman rebels as the "Imam's forces". The rebels are known locally as supporters of Talib the Ex-Imam's brother and the Ex-Imam appears to be no more than a figurehead. The chiefs of his tribe are on the Sultan's side as are the family of the former Imam.

CONFIDENTIAL

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM
CIRCULAR W NUMBER 647 DATED 27TH JULY, 1957.

My telegram circular W No. 645.

OMAN.

The Imamate Bureau in Cairo is putting out a series of increasingly wild statements about the situation. The Bureau is reported to have claimed on 26th July that "the two Oman cities of Nizwa and Izki were yesterday completely destroyed by concentrated British air attacks".

2. This statement is of course a complete invention. As you know, air operations have been confined to military targets and due warning of all attacks has been given and accurate information about the air action that has been taken has been given by United Kingdom authorities in the area.

3. Foreign Office spokesman made a statement on these lines on 26th July. Some interest has also been shown here in possibility of Sultan notifying the United Nations of the action being taken in Oman and my immediately following telegram contains summary of discussion in the House of Lords on 25th July on this Point. It is most unlikely that the Sultan would consider this.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

1952

..MC

I.10571.

Dated: 24th July, 1957.

Rec'd: 30th July, 1957.
1530.

FROM:

External Affairs Office,
LONDON.

Savingram No. Ex.280. CONFIDENTIAL

Repeated Washington No. Ex.216.

Egypt

Following is text of a telegram of 20th July in which the United Kingdom Ambassador at Washington reported on what appears to be a conversation he had with Dulles:-

" Mr. Dulles said that his information was that Nasser was in a pretty desperate mood. Although he had done his best to cook the elections, they had not turned out a resounding success from his point of view. In many cases where alternative candidates had been allowed, these had been elected despite the fact that it was well known that first candidates had Nasser's particular approval.

On the external side, Nasser had gone a good way towards losing the leadership of the Arab World. Consequently, we could take it for certain that he was stirring up Saud on Aqaba and that he was probably also involved in the Oman game.

With this background there was the inevitable speculation of what Nasser would say and do on the anniversary of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal. It had even been suggested that he might declare a Holy war on Israel in order to rally the Arabs behind him once more. Alternatively it was suggested that he might incite the Syrians to some act of folly against Israel.

On present evidence, Mr. Dulles thought that these speculations were more illustrative of a general awareness of Nasser's current frustrations than to be accepted at their face value. But he concluded that we may be lucky if we get past the anniversary with only another speech by Nasser."

MIN & DEPT E.A.

31st July, 1957.

THIS PAGE IS REPRODUCED FROM A BADLY FADED OR ILLEGIBLE SOURCE.

(72/2.

SECRET

ANNEX

MUSCAT AND OMAN (SECRET)

Saudi and Egyptian attempts to detach Oman from the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman by the fomenting of unrest and the establishment of an independent "Imamate" were checked by the reoccupation of Buraimi in October 1955 and the Sultan's re-establishment of his authority in Oman by the march on Nizwa at the end of that year.

2. Since then the Egyptians and Saudis have continued to foment unrest by broadcasts from Saut el Arab and the establishment of an "Imamate of Oman" propaganda office in Cairo, and by the sketchy training of an "Oman liberation army" at Dammam in Saudi Arabia.

3. In recent months reports have multiplied about the running of arms into Oman through the Trucial Coast (and notably Dubai) and the coast of Muscat (e.g. Sur); and about the infiltration of the "Liberation Army" into Oman.

4. A few weeks ago Ibrahim bin Isa, brother of the deposed Shaikh Salih bin Isa of the Harth tribe prepared to defy the Sultan's authority in an area south-east of Nizwa. He was contained by pro-Sultan tribes with the Muscat armed forces in the background, but eventually escaped and made his way to Sib north of Muscat on the coast where he gave himself up to the Sultan on June 14th.

5. It is now reported that on the same day Talib, the brother of the former Imam Ghalib and the driving force behind his pretension landed in Muscat; and that about the same time a quantity of arms including light machine-guns and anti-tank mines was also landed. Talib and Ghalib established themselves in the Jebel Kaur area.

6. The Sultan's forces consists of some 900 men organised into four separate groups, of which the Muscat and Oman Field Force, some 400 in strength with British contract officers, is a mobile force equipped with landrovers. Its small arms include six 3in mortars. There is an artillery section of six guns (3.7in. hows) attached to the Muscat Infantry, a force of about 200 based on the town of Muscat. The Muscat infantry, together with the force of 200 at Sohar, have primarily an internal security role.

7. Local tribes have, presumably under pressure or bribery, supported Talib. Minor engagements have been reported and the Sultan's forces, many of whom are untried local tribesmen of poor fighting stock, got the worst of the exchanges. The morale of these troops is low and they are showing signs of deserting. The Sultan's field force is now on the defensive, having withdrawn to the Fanud area, whilst the Buraimi company, plus one company from the Sohar force, is protecting the road to Buraimi to the Ibri area. The Wadi Somail road between Nizwa and Muscat is therefore undefended, except for one platoon which operates a road block at Izki and is already under desultory firing. A threat to Muscat itself is therefore greatly increased.

THIS PAGE IS REPRODUCED FROM A BADLY FADED OR ILLEGIBLE SOURCE.

8. With the whole field force committed or unreliable, the only forces the Sultan has left are his Muscat infantry and Sohar force (less one company). These are tied to the towns on I.S. duties.

9. The military situation is deteriorating so rapidly that Talib's forces are now firmly established in the Nizwa area of Central Oman, which is temporarily militarily lost to the Sultan. Any further failure by the Sultan to deal firmly with the situation may encourage other tribes to support Talib; there are already indications that one important tribe is wavering and inaction may lead to defections in Sharqiya and elsewhere.

10. There may also be wider repercussions in the rest of the Gulf if it is seen that the Saudis, even without access to Buraimi, are able to undermine the Sultan's authority and successfully to resist him openly even though it be of inspired by Britons.

J.C.G. KEVIN ESQ.,

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFF

With the Compliments

of the

Official Secretary

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom,
Canberra, A. C. T.

Mr Kevin DEA

SECRET

1952

SECRET.

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM CIRCULAR W NUMBER 650 DATED 30TH JULY, 1957.

My telegram circular W No. 647.

OMAN.

Sir Bernard Burrows the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf has visited Muscat. His appreciation is that the rebellion appears to have only small active tribal backing. The Sultan is generally optimistic. Many tribal elements held aloof tending to be against Talib when he first arrived but later hesitated to declare for the Sultan. The announcement of United Kingdom support to the Sultan rallied many of the waverers.

2. The initial military success of the rebels was principally due to the failure of the weapons in the possession of the Sultan's forces in the area to destroy the fort stronghold at Nizwa and to the refusal of the tribal auxiliaries of the Sultan to face the fire from the automatic weapons at the rebels' disposal.

3. The measures we are taking to tighten the ring round the rebel area are likely to weaken the rebels and make the final task of the Sultan's forces easier. It remains true that the whole affair does not merit the attention being paid to it by the World Press.

4. The rocket attacks on the forts were executed with extreme accuracy and severe damage has been done to them without harm to the villages.

5. My immediately following telegram contains text of statement made by a spokesman for the Sultanate on 28th July.

SECRET

PRESSE.

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM
CIRCULAR W NUMBER 651 DATED 30TH JULY, 1957.

OMAN.

My immediately preceding telegram. Following is text. Begins.

This is a statement made by a spokesman for the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. External broadcasts have enlarged the present trouble in Oman and dressed it in a garment not its own. The explanation of this trouble is as follows. The territories of Oman are one country ruled by the Al Bu Said family for more than two hundred years. It was named (Muscat and Oman) to distinguish between it and the sheikhdoms of the Oman Trucial Coast. The country enjoyed peace and contentment and safety until 1955 when one of the neighbouring countries interfered and sowed the seeds of sedition of thinking to distribute bribes to the Sheikhs and the tribes to set them in the way of opposition to their ruler. In order to stop these bribes the Sultan found it necessary to (query group omitted) the peace by military strength and the country became peaceful and the inhabitants enjoyed happiness. At that time Talib Bin Ali one of those influenced by foreign bribes took refuge with that Government which had supported him and stayed there for nearly two years during which time that Government gave him arms and military equipment of new kinds with money for seduction. He came back with this lately and smuggled it into the country and openly declared his defiance of the peace together with that of the men whom he brought with him from abroad where they had been trained with him in military practice by that Government with whom he had taken refuge. His men number between one hundred and fifty and two hundred persons and they are all that support

/him

him and no one else has joined this rebellious man Talib from all the tribes of Oman and they are many except one Sheikh who is Suleiman Bin Hamyar and his tribe. Furthermore Talib is not supported by his own tribe to which he himself belongs and they are in disagreement with him and with his doings in evidence of what we have already said some of the neighbouring tribes were angered at what Talib and the Sheikh who has joined him with his tribe have done and these tribes are now moving with the support of the Sultan's forces to surround the rebels in the mountain places where they are while the rest of the tribes enjoy the happiness and peace of their normal life and carry on their occupations as usual the action taken by the British aircraft to show strength towards these rebels has helped to gather support for the Sultan. Now political and military action is in preparation and will have rapid results which will bring the whole affair to an end. Now the rebels have been enclosed in a small and difficult mountainous area and the forces are surrounding them to reduce their area and to make their position more difficult. Ends.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date. July 29 1957

Oman Revolt Leader Rejects Aid Offer From Chinese

CAIRO, July 28 (A.A.P.). — The Imam (spiritual leader) of Oman, whose followers are in revolt against the Sultan of Oman, has refused an offer of aid from Communist China.

The Imam's official envoy in Egypt, Sheikh Mohammed El-Harity, announced this yesterday, says British United Press.

The Chinese Embassy in Cairo offered the aid on Thursday.

Sheikh El-Harity did not give a reason for the Imam's refusal of the aid, the nature of which was not stated.

Reports from the British base of Sharjah, in Trucial Oman, say that a military build-up is continuing there for an eventual land operation against the rebels in the Sultanate of Oman.

The R.A.F. has suspended its rocket attacks on the rebels and switched to dropping leaflets.

The leaflets are a final call to the rebels to rejoin the red banner of the pro-British Sultan or face further action.

Sultan's Flag Over Rebel Territory

A British official said in Bahrein yesterday that the Sultan's red flag has appeared at three places in Oman which are in rebel hands.

The flags were seen at Izki, Araqi and Ainain following a demonstration of R.A.F. power, in which the fort at Izki was one of the targets.

"This may be some indication of a return of some of the dissidents to the Sultan," the spokesman said.

Syria yesterday called on the United States, Russia and other foreign Powers to end Britain's "intervention" in the Oman rebellion, according to sources in Damascus.

Syria accused Britain of using NATO arms against the rebels, says American Associated Press.

195/2

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

VA

I. 10515/6

INWARD SAVINGRAM.

Sent: 27th July, 1957
1910
Rec'd: 28th July, 1957
1100

~~163~~
~~1953/2/1~~ NF

FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

SAV. 279. CONFIDENTIAL.

Egypt.

State Department (Stabler Egyptian Affairs) gave us following on 26th July:

1. Results of national frong elections had been unexpected in the sense that in some cases candidates known to be especially favoured by Nasser had not been elected. Detailed assessment of results had not yet been made by the Department because many candidates were virtually unknown. Similarly, not very definite conclusions had emerged from an examination of the regime's screening operations. However, in general it seemed that all extreme leftists were excluded with the exception of those who had demonstrated in tangible ways their full support for Nasser and the regime. In certain areas there was some discontent about way in which elections had been conducted. For example, in Alexandria one of Nasser's brothers, who is quite obscure and not particularly popular, was elected by a transparently large majority. Nasser is now reported to believe that elections should not have been held, or alternatively that only one candidate should have been permitted for each seat.

1. It would, however, be premature to draw any conclusion as to the popularity of the regime.

2. Available evidence indicated that with the re-opening of the Canal, economic conditions in Egypt had somewhat improved.

3. The Department had no evidence e ther way to indicate that Egypt had inspired the uprising in Oman.

4. Delivery by Egypt to Saudi Arabia of five jet aircraft of United Kingdom origin was not of itself a new development. It was the second delivery of a total of 25 promised by Egypt early in 1956. No doubt the timing of the delivery was deliberately designed to assist in strong effort currently being made by Nasser (for example general Amer's recent visit to Saudi Arabia) to reach rapprochement with Saud.

5. Department interpreted Egyptian action in permitting "Brigitte Toft" to pass through Suez Canal en route to Israel as indication that Egypt was anxious that status quo prevailing prior to the Suez crisis should be re-established. Rice was not, of course, on the so-called contraband list and the next step would be to see whether tanker carrying oil for Israel would be permitted to use the Canal. On the whole, Departmental

CONFIDENTIAL

.../2.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD SAVINGRAM. L. 10515/6

thinking was that Egypt would agree to this also.

6. Department believed that Soviet and satellite action in disposing of Egyptian cotton in Western markets at lower than world prices might be deliberate attempt on the part of the Soviet to disrupt the normal pattern of Egyptian trade. In this way, Egypt's economic dependence on the Soviet Union would be increased, and eventually Egypt might find that its sole market for cotton was the Soviet Bloc. There continued to be indications that Nasser was concerned by Egypt's dependence on the Soviet Union.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. TRADE (C.M.)
TREASURER & TREASURY

29th July, 1957.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date. July 27 1957

ME

R.A.F. "DISCREETLY" INCREASING AIR STRENGTH IN OMAN

LONDON, July 26 (A.A.P.-Reuter).—The R.A.F. seems to be discreetly building up its air strength in Oman, says "The Times."

The newspapers' correspondent in Sharjah, on the Persian Gulf, says that at Sharjah yesterday there were 12 Venoms, several transport aircraft, a Shackleton bomber and a Canberra bomber.

The Venoms today again attacked strongholds of the rebel followers of the Imam of Oman.

[The rebels, about 1,500 followers of the Imam (religious leader) of Oman, are in revolt against the pro-British Sultan of Muscat and Oman. They demand the Sultan's abdication and the withdrawal of British forces and British oil-prospecting teams.]

The Venoms' target was the fort of Tanuf, a triangular mud-brick building seven miles north of the Imam's headquarters at Nizwa, in Oman.

The Venoms fired rockets and cannon shells into the centre of the deserted fort, the occupants of which had been given 48 hours warning to get clear before the R.A.F. demonstrated its fire-power.

It is reliably reported that the R.A.F. show of strength will be followed by a land forces operation against the Imam's great round fort at Nizwa.

However, this will not necessarily involve British troops.

The British United Press correspondent at Sharjah says that the R.A.F. is airlifting petrol, ammunition and other supplies to Buraimi, where Trucial Oman forces have a base.

The forces have established advanced bases farther south from Buraimi, but they still have a long way to go to the rebel centre at Nizwa.

Questions In Commons

In the House of Commons yesterday, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, said Britain had relationships in the Persian Gulf of paramount importance.

A former Labour Defence Minister, Mr. Emanuel Shinwell, asked: "Are our oil interests in jeopardy, because if that is so we have to give that matter very careful consideration in the interests of our economy?"

Mr. Lloyd: "I am certainly not going to say that our oil interests are directly in jeopardy . . ."

He added that Britain intended to do her duty by someone who had been a firm friend and whose sovereignty was acknowledged.

Mr. Lloyd said the air action already taken was a limited operation, and the necessary forces were being placed at the disposal of the local military commanders as they were required.

He said no British casualties had been reported.

1952

PRESSE.

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM CIRCULAR W. NO. 648, DATED 27TH JULY, 1957.

OMAN.

My immediately preceding telegram.

Following is summary. Begins.

In the House of Lords on 25th July Lord Gosford was asked whether notification had been given to the United Nations of the action being taken in Oman. He replied "We have not in fact informed the United Nations as in this case there is no necessity to do so".

2. In further reply Lord Gosford said "This is an internal affair relating to the Sultan of Muscat. The fact that he has appealed to us for help does not in our view oblige us to inform the United Nations". To further questions he replied "It is surely up to the Sultan if it is up to anybody to inform the United Nations". When asked if Muscat was a member he replied "No but the Sultan can still inform the United Nations".

Ends.

195/2.

→ MIDDLE EAST

RADIO PEKING
NEWS IN ENGLISH
7 p.m. Saturday, 27th July 1957

NOTE: The tape from which this broadcast has been transcribed will be kept for ten days. If there is any question which might be answered by replaying the tape, please phone the External Affairs Liaison Officer, MU.1541, before the time is up.

---

1. All the open-hearth furnaces in the two steel smelting plants in Anshan have been reconstructed and up-to-date equipment installed. The biggest of these turned out its first heat of steel since reconstruction on Thursday. The time required to produce a heat of steel in this furnace has been cut by over two hours, and it can now smelt 300 tons of steel at a time. This year's steel output in Anshan is expected to approach the target of 3,220,000 tons, the target originally set for 1960.

2. In the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, various construction projects are being carried out for the development of animal husbandry. Following the establishment of the first grassland tractor station in the Region, preparatory work has started for building two more such stations. In the water deficient pastoral areas, irrigation projects are being constructed. A total of more than 50,000 acres has been sown to fodder and food crop this year. More than 600 stations for improving sheep breeding are being set up by the State.

3. In (Kaisong), Korea, a meeting marking the 4th anniversary of the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement was held yesterday. Speaking at the meeting, the Chief Korean Chinese delegate to the Military Armistice Commission declared that the Korean people and army would strive to safeguard the agreement and for the peaceful unification of the country. He reaffirmed that Korea and China would in no circumstances agree to Washington's unilateral repeal of the agreement. Leading papers in Peking today carried editorials to mark this anniversary. The People's Daily said that the agreement was achieved at the cost of the lives of the Korean and Chinese people in defence of the security of their countries and of peace in Asia. The Korean Chinese side has been abiding by the provisions of the agreement. The US was forced to sign the agreement, but ever since has been trying to obstruct its implementation and has violated the agreement on the repatriation of war prisoners, intruded into the netural zone and the areas controlled by the Korean Chinese side, expanded Sigman Ree's armed forces, smuggled weapons and military equipment into South Korea, and expelled from South Korea the inspection teams of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. The People's Daily says evidently the real purpose of the US is to wreck the stability of the Korean Armistice and create a tense situation there. The people of the world, including the American people, have united more closely under the banner of defending world peace.

4. In Hong Kong, a committee of 13 Kowlung villagers has issued a statement demanding that the British authorities stop levelling houses in .... village, change the eviction plan and give proper accommodation and compensation to the Chinese residents who have already been thrown out of their homes. The statement protested against the authorities disregard of the opinions of the people in pushing through measures of forcible eviction of villagers, and demanded a satisfactory reply from the Hong Kong British authorities.

5. According to a Sydney report, the Australian Labour Party Leader, Dr. Evatt, has said that Australia should give full recognition to the Chinese People's Republic in disregard of Mr. Dulles' prejudiced view. Dr. Evatt also said Australia should support the restoration of China's lawful right in the United Nations; recognition of China would make it possible for the big powers to co-operate in easing the disastrous cold war.

6. In Cairo, an Oman spokesman said on Thursday that the Imam of Oman has turned down the Sultan of Muscat's cease-fire proposal. He demanded that British armed forces and oil-prospecting teams withdraw from Oman and that the Sultan of Muscat ablicate. The spokesman said the Oman nationalists have the moral support of several Arab countries. A Peking People's Daily commentator today demands the immediate stop to the suppression of the people of Oman in their struggle for independence. The people's struggle has won the support of many Arab countries and the British should have learned their lesson in their defeat in Egypt, and that Arab nationalism has become a powerful, irresistible tide. The purpose behind the British action in Oman is to maintain British oil interests in the Persian Gulf; the factor of AngloAmerican rivalry for oil in the Middle East is obviously involved. The comentator draws attention to the US ruling clique's usual trick of taking advantage of anti-British feelings in the Arab countries to replace British influence there, and the people of Oman must sharpen their vigilance against US imperialism, including US oil magnates, while struggling against the British colonial rule.

SECRET

1952

HP.MMc

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

I.10403

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

Dated: 25th July 1957
2320
Rec'd: 26th July 1957
1210

FROM:

Australian High Commission,
L O N D O N.

1768. SECRET.

Repeated Washington 158.

From External.

Oman.

(a) The United Kingdom has now approved air strikes against movements by day on selected roads and tracks. The objective is to prevent the movement of arms, which are being smuggled in by sea by night, also to isolate tribes to prevent the rebellion spreading and to prevent dissident troop movements against friendly tribes.

(b) The present plan of action was four pronged.

First: Action by sea to prevent arms smuggling. It was known that small boats were bringing in arms from Saudi Arabia though none had been captured yet.

Second: Action in the air.

Third: Action by land. The Sultan's forces are to close in gradually and progressively isolate tribes.

Fourth: Political action by the Sultan.

(c) The objective of the dissidents is independence of Oman under the Imam. Beeley considered that the tribesmen generally were not particularly concerned who was the ruler of Oman. All they were anxious to do was to be on the winning side.

(d) The role of King Saud in the rebellion is uncertain, though it was clear that arms coming from Saudi Arabia must have some official connivance. Saud's sudden arrival at Asmara, with only 24 hours notice to the Governor, suggested that the visit might be an alibi. Alternatively Saudi officials seeking to force a return to closer relations with Egypt might be behind the move without Saud's knowledge.

(e) Caccia had kept the United States fully informed of both facts and intentions. So far the United Kingdom had had very little United States comment. He assumed that the United States would be anxious regarding the effect United Kingdom intervention might have on relations between Saud and Egypt and also between Saud and the United States. The United States probably had not

SECRET

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

I.10403

commented because they were not in a position to suggest to the United Kingdom an alternative course of action. I asked Beeley whether the United Kingdom and United States agreed on the assessment of Saud's territorial ambitions. He said that the United Kingdom were quite convinced that Saud aimed ultimately to absorb the fringe States. The United States were not quite so sure of this. The United Kingdom believed that an independent Oman was only a step to later incorporation in Saudi Arabia. Beeley referred to the Press report of the statement by Lincoln White in Washington which he thought substantially accurate. The principal points were that no approach had been made to the United States or the United Kingdom by Saudi Arabia and that American attitude remained detached, though anxious, with officials privately hoping that Britain would resolve the trouble quickly without jeopardizing the good relations which America had been developing with Saud.

(f) The United Kingdom has been at pains to scotch rumours of Aramco lorries carrying arms into Oman. Beeley commented that the rumours were quite untrue, also it was most undesirable that they should be spread.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE.
P.M.'s.

26th July, 1957.

SEC A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA
E.AF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P

G

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date July 2nd 1957

ME

Dangers For Britain In The Oman Trouble

From A STAFF CORRESPONDENT IN LONDON

Britain's rallying to the aid of an obscure Sultan in a remote hot and dusty corner of Arabia is a strange and mysterious business to most Britons. But beyond the local feuding and skirmishing are much larger dangers.

ONE is that if Britain held aloof her standing in the neighbouring oil lands of the Persian Gulf might be diminished. Another is that by intervening, Britain and the United States could well find themselves on opposite sides of the fence.

The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, where the trouble has arisen, is not a British protectorate. It is an independent State. But there have been close relationships between Britain and successive Sultans for 150 years, culminating in a new treaty of friendship signed in 1951.

The present Sultan, Said bin Taimur, has in particular leaned heavily on British advice and support. His Foreign Minister, Mr. Neil Innes, is a Briton. His somewhat slender military forces are trained and commanded by British officers, and the forces are subsidised indirectly by the Iraq Petroleum Company, in which British capital has the major interest.

But Muscat and Oman is not at the moment one of the oil lands. It has not, like some of its neighbours, a "Cadillac economy." Most of its half a million population just about scratch a living.

Intensive oil exploration is undertaken by a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company, which holds a concession over the whole sultanate. This exploration has thus far yielded little result, but still it is pursued vigorously, and at any time big oil reserves could be found which would really put the sultanate on the map.

tan asserted himself, sent out a force to the Imam's stronghold at Nizwa. Only one shot was fired before the Imam, Ghaleb bin Ali, was seen climbing down a rope from his fort and making his escape. He was thought to have gone into neighbouring Saudi Arabia, but it seems that he has been lying low these last two years in one of the local villages.

About a month ago the Imam's brother landed on the Persian Gulf coast and made his way to Nizwa. The Imam emerged from his hiding and rebellion began.

Modern weapons and land mines, never before seen in this area, made their appearance. The Sultan's own forces were not strong enough to dislodge the rebels in a ground operation so he made his appeal to Britain for assistance. Britain has responded.

The view of the British Government is that if it fails to help the Sultan other Arabian rulers with whom Britain has treaties would consider the treaties of little value and would tend to side with whatever force looked like gaining ascendancy. This would be taken to be Saudi Arabia. The next step could be the spread of Saudi Arabian influence to the rich oil sheikdoms of Bahrein and Kuwait, for it is a dynastic ambition of the Saudis to bring the whole of the Arabian peninsula under their sway.

The British Government does not directly accuse Saudi Arabia of being behind the rebellion. The Foreign Secretary, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, just says he has his suspicions as to where the arms of the rebels came from. Here there

THE SULTAN

is an extremely delicate situation which many observers think carries prospects of another cleavage between Britain and America.

There are close links between the United States and Saudi Arabia. King Saud is reckoned as the most powerful supporter of the Eisenhower Doctrine for the Middle East. The Arabian American Oil Company has monopoly rights in King Saud's territory.

America is far from anxious to have a clash with King Saud. On the contrary, from a strictly business viewpoint, American interests would stand to gain from any extension of King Saud's influence in Arabia. If his territory extended their oil concessions would extend. There is a further complication in that Aramco and the Iraq Petroleum Company have rival claims in the border area between Saudi Arabia and Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.

Britain can, therefore, hardly hope to enlist United States support. All the British Government seems to hope for this time is United States understanding.

Days Of Empire

Britain's interest in this whole coastal area of Eastern Arabia, incidentally, arose after expeditions by the British East India Company to put down piracy. The object was to protect the trade routes of the Indian Empire and a series of treaties was made with the various local rulers.

These treaties, however, were mostly with rulers of tribes rather than rulers of clearly defined territories. Boundary lines in those days meant little. To-day they could mean a very great deal whenever oil is found.

But, even to-day, boundaries have not been agreed upon, and this is the cause of a great deal of trouble. It has brought the Sultan of Muscat and Oman into sharp conflict with Saudi Arabia over the ownership of a group of villages known as the Buraimi Oasis. And it has long caused feuding within the area the Sultan claims as his own.

One of the regions of the sultanate is Oman, and here many years ago the local tribesmen claimed that their land was not part of the sultanate at all. They elected their own leader whom they called the Imam (religious leader), and for nearly 40 years successive Imams of Oman held sway over substantial tracts of territory.

Then in 1955 the present Sul-

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date July 26 1957

ME

M/2.

R.A.F. Fighters Attack Rebel Headquarters In Oman Capital

LONDON, July 25 (A.A.P.-Reuter).—R.A.F. Venom jet fighters today attacked the headquarters of the Oman rebels with rockets and cannon fire.

The fighters made direct hits on the great mud-brick fort at Nizwa, Oman's capital, from a height of 700 feet.

Pilots returning to refuel and rearm said that the fort, town and surrounding datepalm groves seemed deserted.

Nizwa Fort, which has walls 25 feet high, dominates the poverty-stricken mud cottages of about 6,000 villagers on a mountain encircled by a little plain in the shadow of the 10,000ft Jabal Akhdar, or Green Mountain.

This is believed to be the stronghold of the rebellious triumvirate — Sheik Ghalib bin Ali, his ambitious younger brother, Taleb bin Ali, and the "Lord of the Green Mountain," Suleiman bin Himyar.

To-day's attack was made by four fighters after the expiry of an ultimatum warning the rebels to leave.

It followed a similar attack yesterday on the rebel-held fort of Izki, 50 miles from Nizwa.

The fighters made 12 attacks on yesterday's target after ensuring that there was no sign of movement nearby.

All their rockets hit the target.

Both attacks were in support of the pro-British Sultan of Muscat and Oman, who is trying to put down a revolt by tribesmen led by the Imam (religious leader) of Oman.

The operations are understood to have been directed from the Persian Gulf base of Sharjah by Air Vice-Marshal Sinclair, commander of British forces on the Arabian Peninsula.

Airman Tells Story

The leader of the Venoms, Flight-Lieut. Thomas Syme, said: "We attacked the fort today after first flying low over the town to check that nobody was in the vicinity.

"We then came in at 700 feet and fired on the roof of the fort.

"We hope to have the white flag (the Imam's personal standard) down before the day's sorties end.

"We were using rockets and 20-millimetre cannon, but it is hard to say what damage was done. We must wait for photographs tonight.

"We did not notice any return fire as we went in. We were over the target about 20 minutes."

Flight-Lieut. Syme said that in yesterday's strike against the fort at Izki an old woman was on top of the fort.

"So we buzzed her and waited until she scuttled away before attacking," he said.

The Sultan is regrouping his forces and is expected to move up to Adam, south of Nizwa, in an attempt to trap the rebels against the mountain range behind them.

The sultanate's 1,500 fighting men are led by 10 British officers.

In London last night, a Foreign Office spokesman said: "There is no truth in reports that the Sultan has asked the ex-Imam for a ceasefire, or that British forces have been repulsed by supporters of the ex-Imam."

These events had been reported by the Imam's spokesman in Cairo.

King Saud of Saudi Arabia left Addis Ababa today for home by way of Eritrea after a State visit to Abyssinia

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date July 25th 1957

ME

R.A.F. FIGHTERS IN SORTIES AGAINST REBELS IN OMAN

LONDON, July 24 (A.A.P.-Reuter).—R.A.F. jet fighters operating from a base in the Persian Gulf today made "offensive sorties" in the rebel area of Muscat and Oman.

It is believed that the fighters pinpointed buildings in villages or towns to demonstrate to the rebels the accuracy of their destructive power.

The rebels, about 1,500 tribesmen, led by the Imam (religious leader) of Oman, are in revolt against the pro-British Sultan of Oman.

The sorties follow leaflet warnings dropped over the rebel area yesterday, telling the people to leave the area by this morning.

The fighters operated from Sharjah, which is about 200 miles from the scene of the rising.

Rockets and cannon shells for jet fighters are reported to have been flown yesterday from Cyprus to Sharjah.

The "Daily Telegraph" correspondent in Muscat says that if today's operation does not frighten the rebels into abandoning their revolt, the operation will be extended to other parts of the rebel-held area.

It is believed that Britain will probably provide air support and minor reinforcements of troops for the Sultan.

Two R.A.F. transport planes left Nairobi yesterday with men of the First Battalion, the Cameronians, reportedly for Sharjah, and another party of Cameronians has been sent to Sharjah from Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf.

Check On Gun-running

A British frigate is patrolling the coast to prevent gun-running to the rebels, who have already received land-mines and automatic weapons from "outside," according to the British Political Resident in Bahrein, Sir Bernard Burrows.

Sir Bernard is expected to fly from Bahrein to Muscat today to confer with the Sultan about British aid.

Both London and Washington are moving cautiously to avoid any possibility of the revolt upsetting their relations.

The British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, told the House of Commons yesterday that the United States had been kept in close touch with the situation.

Britain knew arms had been smuggled into Oman from outside, and she had suspicions where they had come from.

[Saudi Arabia, which is receiving U.S. military and economic aid, is reported to be backing the rebls.]

American Influence

"The Times" says in a leading article today that serious developments may follow if Britain fails to snuff out the rebellion and to stop the supply of arms to the rebels.

"The people in the best position to help in arresting this flow of arms are the American Government, for they still have influence at Court in Saudi Arabia," it says. "Whoever is organising the traffic, that is where the arms are coming from."

In Washington yesterday, the British Ambassador, Sir Harold Caccia, said that Britain had been keeping the United States informed of developments in the revolt, but would not ask the United States to do anything.

The State Department spokesman, Mr. Lincoln White, said the United States had made no offer to mediate in the dispute.

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SHA.MMc

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

I.10338

Dated: 24th July 1957
2220
Rec'd: 25th July 1957
1230

195/2.

FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

844. SECRET.

Repeated London 109.

Oman Revolt.

Your telegram 627.

United Kingdom Embassy confirms that the representations mentioned in paragraph 3 of our 833 were made by Caccia to Dulles. According to the Embassy Caccia described to Dulles the situation which gave rise to the British action and advised him that the United Kingdom had consented to the use of the R.A.F. since the Sultan's forces were not sufficiently strong to deal with Immam's supporters. The Embassy informs us that Dulles did not comment.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
P.M.'s.

25th July, 1957.

SEC A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA
E.AF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P

G

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

SHA:ABK.

I.10287.

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

195/2.

Dated: 24th July, 1957.
2230.

FROM:

Rec'd: 25th July, 1957.
0830.

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

833. SECRET.

Oman Revolt.
Repeated London 105.

The State Department (Newsom) gave us the following on 23rd July.

1. Little concrete information had reached the Department regarding the cause and timing of the rebellion. Historically however the Sultan of Muscat and Oman had only been able to exert more than nominal sovereignty in the area of inner Oman because of active support of the United Kingdom. The area had always been troublesome and tribal rebellions might be expected at any time irrespective of possible Saudi or Egyptian inspiration.

2. The present tentative view of the Department was that the outbreak had not been planned by Saudi Arabia and/or Egypt as a deliberate effort to weaken the United Kingdom position in Gulf. (Naturally Egyptian propaganda would make most of development). On present evidence it appeared that Saudi Arabia had merely facilitated movements of Immam's supporters into inner Oman. This did not necessarily have sinister connotations. Historically political and religious relations between Saudi Arabia and inner Oman were such that the King would feel obliged to assist Immam and his followers.

3. The United Kingdom had informed the United States of its belief that the rebellion was inspired by Egypt and Saudi Arabia and of the need for the United Kingdom to give positive assistance to the Sultan if British position in the Gulf was not to be endangered. The United States had not yet decided what representations if any it would make to the United Kingdom.

4. Newsom told us the following personally and in confidence.

(A) The United States was gravely concerned about the potential consequences of the United Kingdom action. While the Saudis had not as yet made representations to the United States, (Saud is in Asmara), the Department anticipated Saud would strongly urge the United States to prevail on the United Kingdom to desist from a policy of armed suppression. Having regard to the present United States-Saudi Arabian relations (our 783) failure on the part of the United States to respond would endanger United States influence with Saudi Arabia and possible reversion by Saud to close association with Nasser. Saud's position was such that whatever his own views might be he would feel impelled to heed those of his advisers who contend that the United States was not a true friend of Saudi Arabia but simply used it for its own purposes.

(B) In deciding to use the R.A.F. against the rebels Newsom hoped the United Kingdom had taken fully into account repercussions for the whole Western position in the Middle East and the consequences for United States relations with Saudi Arabia. He feared however that United Kingdom policy had once again been influenced by "cliche", that there was

a conspiracy between Saudi Arabia and American oil companies to drive the United Kingdom out of the Gulf. He implied that in fact British advisers in the Gulf (including Muscat and Oman) had far more direct control over the Rulers than was alleged and that it might virtually be pretence to imply it was on their own initiative that the Rulers had requested United Kingdom assistance. He could not understand why the United Kingdom appeared no longer capable of pursuing a policy of mediation between Ø Ø and the Sultan which it had used so successfully in the area in the past. In fact the inhabitants of inner Oman had legitimate grievances and Saudi Arabia as the principal power of the Peninsula had a legitimate interest in their future. The State Department remained as firmly convinced as ever that to pursue a conciliatory policy with Saud was not appeasment, since his policy was not the outcome of an immoderate appetite for territorial acquisition. Newsom said the events of the past 12 months had proved the United States assessment of Saud to be more valid than that of United Kingdom.

5. Please safeguard Newsom as source of the foregoing.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE.
P.M.'S.

(Ø Corrupt Group)

25th July, 1957.

SEC A/Ss UN PAC&AM CR AM&SP S&SEA SA E.AF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT C&P.
G.

→ M.E.

CONFIDENTIAL

F.A.C./INF. 15/57

195/2

THE SITUATION IN OMAN

Background to the Present Revolt.

1. Oman (or the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman) on the south-eastern corner of the Arabian peninsula, is divided into three main parts : Dhofar in the south, bordered by the Aden Protectorate, the eastern coastal district of Muscat at the entrance to the Persian Gulf and the hilly interior of Oman.

2. The Sultanate is an independent sovereign state, but has been in treaty relations with the United Kingdom for over a century. The Sultan has a British Foreign Minister.

3. At the time of accession to power of the present ruling dynasty in the 18th century, the Sultan was both temporal ruler and Imam (religious head). Later, however, there was some division of authority whereby the Sultan recognized the existence of a separate Imamate in Oman and undertook not to interfere in the internal affairs of the tribes owing allegiance to the Imam. At the same time the Sultan maintained his sovereignty over the entire Sultanate; however, for the forty years up to 1955, the Sultan's authority in Oman was no more than theoretical and effective control was exercised by the Imam.

4. Some two years ago, in December, 1955, the Imam, no doubt motivated by hopes of the discovery of oil* and confident of the support of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, attempted to set up an independent state of Oman and applied for membership of the Arab League.

5. Faced with this situation, the Sultan made a determined and completely successful attempt to re-establish his authority in Oman. His forces, which include British officers under contract to him, met with only token resistance and appeared to have little difficulty in persuading sheikhs who had supported the Imam to transfer their allegiance to the Sultan.

6. The Imam found refuge in Cairo where it was no doubt easy for him to gain support for the attempt he is now making to recapture his former position, a development which would further weaken British prestige in the Persian Gulf area. His supporters, reportedly equipped with arms supplied by Saudi Arabia, are reported by the press to have gained control of the major part of Oman including, or adjacent to, the area in which oil prospecting is being carried out. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, in the House of Commons, has described the area in which the disturbances have taken place as follows: the Central Oman is a mountainous area with the highest mountains rising to 9,000 feet. It is surrounded by desert. There is no front line but rather a constantly shifting pattern of tribal allegiances and defections with minor armed skirmishes. There is no question, therefore, of large scale operations by British troops on the ground.

The Position of the United Kingdom.

7. The Sultan appealed to the United Kingdom for military assistance. Existing treaty relations do not bind the United Kingdom to provide assistance, but assistance has been provided in the past in similar circumstances. Moreover, the United Kingdom has two air bases in the Sultanate.

/After initial....

---

* The Sultan has granted concessions to British companies in Muscat and Oman, and to an American company in Dhofar (after the concession there had been surrendered by the British company). It is to be expected that Aramco would claim oil rights in any separate state of Oman dependent on Saudi Arabia.

8. After initial misgivings because of the difficult situation that would be created with Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom acceded to the Sultan's request although it is not at present intended that British land forces will be employed. It is hoped that limited use of the R.A.F. will restore the position. The decision is explained by the need to prevent the spread of the dissident movement throughout the Sultanate and to the Trucial Sheikhdoms. The consequences of such a spreading of the revolt could be very dangerous for the United Kingdom position in the Persian Gulf area as a whole.

The Present Situation.

9. Latest press reports indicate that as a result of small scale R.A.F. operations several tribal leaders have already withdrawn their support from the Imam. The R.A.F. has now reverted to a leaflet dropping role. However, for the Sultan fully to re-assert his authority it will be necessary for his forces to occupy strongholds formerly under the control of the Imam. These forces have already begun an advance into the interior and it appears that some British troops have been moved to Sharjah (one of the Trucial Sheikhdoms) to give support if necessary.

The Position of the United States.

10 The United States' attitude to the question is not clear. Statements by the State Department's Press officer seem to indicate that the United States is trying to keep out of the issue. However, the matter poses an embarrassing problem for them in view of the conflicting attitudes of Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. Saudi Arabia has recently been showing increasing hostility to the United States' attitude with respect to the Gulf of Aqaba. United States' support for the British position with regard to Oman would strengthen this trend and tend to re-align Saudi Arabia with Egypt, a move which United States' policy aims strenuously to avert.

Reaction of the Arab States.

11. It might have been expected that the Arab States - particularly Egypt - would have reacted with violent propaganda-attacks on British "imperialism". However we have seen only a report that Syria has called on the United Nations, United States and the Soviet to end British "intervention" in Oman.

The Buraimi Question.

12. One likely outcome of the present dispute, is a revival of the Buraimi question, involving Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman and the British protectorate of Abu Dhabi.

13. Following the break-down of an attempt to settle the question by arbitration - as a result of the exposure of Saudi bribery - and the expulsion of Saudi forces from Buraimi by British-led troops, no progress has been made towards a settlement. The United Kingdom are prepared to enter negotiations with Saudi Arabia, but only on the whole field of differences between the two countries in which Buraimi, in the United Kingdom view, should not figure prominently. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, claims priority should be given to the Buraimi issue. The United Kingdom stand is based on the views that the claims of Abu Dhabi and Muscat are sound and that any concessions to Saudi Arabia would seriously threaten the whole British position in the Persian Gulf by opening the way for new Saudi subversion and intimidation.

14. With regard to Buraimi, the United States tends to side with Saudi Arabia. The United States does not share United Kingdom fears of Saudi ambitions to extend her influence throughout the Arabian peninsula and is more concerned that the United Kingdom refusal to negotiate will prevent the adoption by Saudi Arabia of a more pro-Western attitude.

Conclusion

15. The United Kingdom has had little alternative but to intervene in the revolt. The extent of the United Kingdom's intervention up to the present is wisely limited and designed to prevent bloodshed. The occurrence of the revolt and the United Kingdom's intervention in it may effect the United States' plans to make Saudi Arabia a key ally in the Middle East. At this time, however, there seems to be no way, short of endangering more vital interests, of avoiding the possibility of this consequence.

Department of External Affairs.

25th July, 1957.

Copy also forwarded to Mr. Arnott.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

195/2.

25th July, 1957.

THE SITUATION IN OMAN

MINISTER

SECRETARY

Background to the Present Revolt

1. Oman (or the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman) on the south-eastern corner of the Arabian peninsular, is divided into three main parts - Dhofar in the south, bordered by the Aden Protectorate, the eastern coastal district of Muscat at the entrance to the Persian Gulf and the hilly interior of Oman.

2. The Sultanate is an independent sovereign state, but has been in treaty relations with the United Kingdom for over a century. The Sultan has a British Foreign minister.

3. At the time of accession to power of the present ruling dynasty in the 18th century, the Sultan was both temporal ruler and Imam (religious head). Later, however, there was some division of authority whereby the Sultan recognized the existence of a separate Imamate in Oman and undertook not to interfere in the internal affairs of the tribes owing allegiance to the Imam. At the same time the Sultan maintained his sovereignty over the entire Sultanate, however, for the forty years up to 1955, the Sultan's authority in Oman was no more than theoretical and effective control was exercised by the Imam.

4. Some two years ago, in December, 1955, the Imam, no doubt motivated by hopes of the discovery of oil* and confident of the support of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, attempted to set up an independent state of Oman and applied for membership of the Arab League.

5. Faced with this situation, the Sultan made a determined and completely successful attempt to re-establish his authority in Oman. His forces, which include British officers under contract to him, met with only token resistance and appeared to have little difficulty in persuading sheikhs who had supported the Imam to transfer their allegiance to the Sultan

6. The Imam found refuge in Cairo where it was no doubt easy for him to gain support for the attempt he is now making to re-capture his former position, a development which would further weaken British prestige in the Persian Gulf area. His supporters, reportedly equipped with arms supplied by Saudi Arabia, are reported by the press to have gained control of the major part of Oman including, or adjacent to, the area in which oil prospecting is being carried out. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, in the House of Commons, has described the area in which the disturbances have taken place as follows: the Central Oman is a mountainous area with the highest mountains rising to 9,000 feet. It is surrounded by desert. There is no front line but rather a constantly shifting pattern of tribal allegiances and defections with minor armed skirmishes. There is no question, therefore, of large scale operations by British troops on the ground.

CONFIDENTIAL

* The Sultan has granted concessions to British companies in Muscat and Oman, and to an American company in Dhofar (after the concession there had been surrendered by the British company). It is to be expected that Aramco would claim oil rights in any separate state of Oman dependent on Saudi Arabia.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Position of the United Kingdom

7. The Sultan has now appealed to the United Kingdom for military assistance. Existing treaty relations do not bind the United Kingdom to provide assistance, but assistance has been provided in the past in similar circumstances. Moreover, the United Kingdom has two air bases in the Sultanate.

8. After initial misgivings because of the difficult situation that would be created with Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom has acceded to the Sultan's request although it is not at present intended that British land forces will be employed. It is hoped that limited use of the R.A.F. will restore the position. The decision is explained by the need to prevent the spread of the dissident movement throughout the Sultanate and to the Trucial Sheikhdoms. The consequences of such a spreading of the revolt could be very dangerous for the United Kingdom position in the Persian Gulf area as a whole.

The Position of the United States

9. The United States' attitude to the question is not known. Statements by the State Department's Press officer seem to indicate that the United States is trying to keep out of the issue. However, the matter poses an embarrassing problem for them in view of the conflicting attitudes of Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. Saudi Arabia has recently been showing increasing hostility to the United States' attitude with respect to the Gulf of Aqaba. United States' support for the British position with regard to Oman would strengthen this trend and tend to re-align Saudi Arabia with Egypt, a move which United States' policy aims strenuously to avert.

The Buraimi Question

10. One likely outcome of the present dispute, is a revival of the Buraimi question, involving Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman and the British protectorate of Abu Dhabi.

11. Following the break-down of an attempt to settle the question by arbitration - as a result of the exposure of Saudi bribery - and the expulsion of Saudi forces from Buraimi by British-led troops, no progress has been made towards a settlement. The United Kingdom are prepared to enter negotiations with Saudi Arabia, but only on the whole field of differences between the two countries in which Buraimi, in the United Kingdom view, should not figure prominently. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, claims priority should be given to the Buraimi issue. The United Kingdom stand is based on the views that the claims of Abu Dhabi and Muscat are sound and that any concessions to Saudi Arabia would seriously threaten the whole British position in the Persian Gulf by opening the way for new Saudi subversion and intimidation.

12. With regard to Buraimi, the United States tends to side with Saudi Arabia. The United States does not share United Kingdom fears of Saudi ambitions to extend her influence throughout the Arabian peninsula and is more concerned that the United Kingdom refusal to negotiate will prevent the adoption by Saudi Arabia of a more pro-Western attitude.

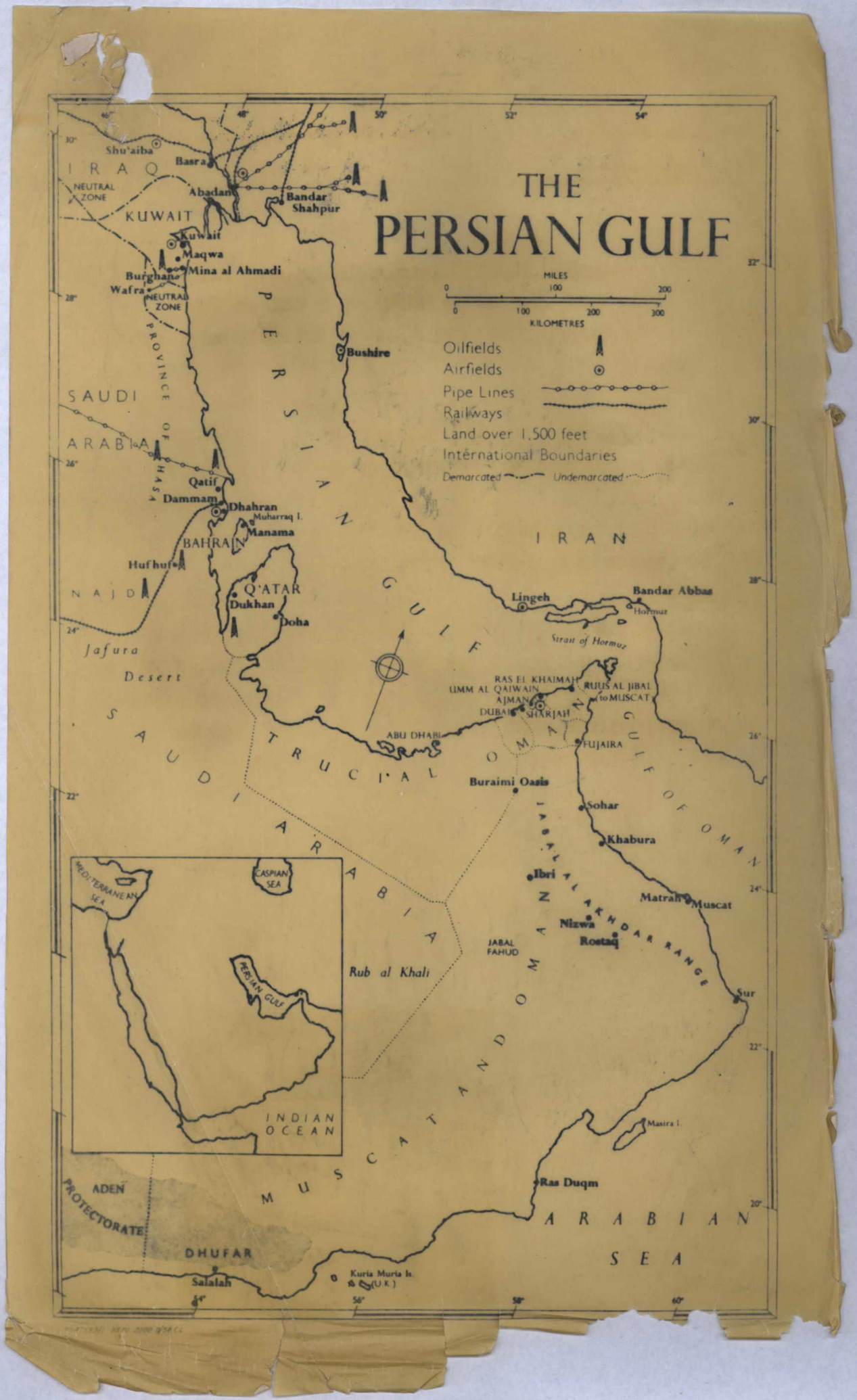
CONFIDENTIAL

Conclusion

13. The United Kingdom has had little alternative but to intervene in the revolt. The extent of the United Kingdom's intervention up to the present is wisely limited and designed to prevent bloodshed. The occurrence of the revolt and the United Kingdom's intervention in it may affect the United States' plans to make Saudi Arabia a key ally in the Middle East. At this time, however, there seems to be no way, short of endangering more vital interests, of avoiding this consequence.

(J.C.G. KEVIN)
Assistant Secretary

A.P. Renouf/H.D.White
Europe, Africa and Middle East Branch


THE
PERSIAN GULF
MILES
0 100 200
0 100 200 300
KILOMETRES
Oilfields
Airfields
Pipe Lines
Railways
Land over 1,500 feet
International Boundaries
Demarcated
Undemarcated
IRAQ
KUWAIT
NEUTRAL ZONE
SAUDI ARABIA
BAHRAIN
Q'ATAR
IRAN
PERSIAN GULF
TRUCIAL OMAN
GULF OF OMAN
Shu'aiba
Basra
Abadan
Bandar Shahpur
Kuwait
Maqwa
Mina al Ahmadi
Burghan
Wafra
Bushire
Province of Hasa
Qatif
Dammam
Dhahran
Muharraq I.
Manama
Hufhuf
Najd
Dukhan
Doha
Jafura Desert
Lingeh
Bandar Abbas
Hormuz
Strait of Hormuz
Ras El Khaimah
Umm al Qaiwain
Ajman
Dubai
Sharjah
Ruus al Jibal
to Muscat
Abu Dhabi
Fujaira
Buraimi Oasis
Sohar
Khabura
Ibri
Matrah
Muscat
Nizwa
Rostaq
Jabal Akhdar Range
Jabal Fahud
Rub al Khali
Sur
Masira I.
Ras Duqm
Muscat and Oman
Arabian Sea
Aden Protectorate
Dhufar
Salalah
Kuria Muria Is.
(U.K.)
Mediterranean Sea
Caspian Sea
Persian Gulf
Indian Ocean

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper Daily Wireless Bulletin File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date July 24 1957

* * * * * ME.

NO RIVALRY BETWEEN U.S., BRITISH OIL FIRMS IN OMAN, AIDE SAYS

WASHINGTON, JULY 23 -- (USIS) -- THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT TODAY DENIED BRITISH PRESS REPORTS OF RIVALRY BETWEEN BRITISH AND AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES IN THE SULTANATE OF MUSCAT AND OMAN ON THE PERSIAN PENINSULA.

STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS OFFICER, LINCOLN WHITE, SAID THE ONLY U.S. INTEREST IN OMAN IS TO SEE THAT TENSION IN THE GENERAL AREA DOES NOT INCREASE.

WHITE SAID BRITISH AND AMERICAN MEMBERS OF THE IRAQ PETROLEUM COMPANY, WHICH HOLDS OIL EXPLORATION CONCESSIONS IN MUSCAT, ARE "WORKING TOGETHER."

THE PRESS OFFICER SAID THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT OFFERED TO MEDIATE THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE REBEL FORCES IN THE AREA.

WHITE SAID THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS BEING KEPT INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

* * * * *

THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DIGITISED IN SECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/25

Published at Sydney Date July 24 1957

MS

Fears Growing Of Anglo-U.S. Rift Over Uprising In Oman

From Our Staff Correspondent And A.A.P.

LONDON, July 23.—Fears are growing in Britain and the United States that the revolt in Oman will lead to new strains on Anglo-U.S. friendship.

Britain has promised to help the Sultan of Oman put down the revolt. Saudi Arabia, which is receiving U.S. military and economic aid, is reported to be backing the rebels.

Rival claims by British and U.S. oil companies in the Arabian peninsula are also complicating the situation.

Fifteen hundred tribesmen are in revolt against the pro-British Sultan of Oman.

Reports from Muscat, capital of Oman, say they have control of 5,000 square miles of the parched, rugged interior of the Sultanate.

British officers with the Sultan's forces say the rebels are armed with a variety of weapons, from ancient rifles to modern automatics.

The rebels are followers of the Imam (spiritual leader) of Oman, who tried to set up an independent State in Oman in 1955.

Talks With Dulles Welcomed

The "Daily Express" today welcomes the report that the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Harold Caccia, has seen the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. John Foster Dulles, on the Oman problem.

"On this issue, misunderstanding would be dangerous and to take the risk of it would be utterly irresponsible," the newspaper says.

"The Times" says: "The real danger is that hostilities in Oman could give the appearance of an Anglo-American rift, in view of the close links existing between America and Saudi Arabia and of the rival claims of British and American oil companies in this area."

The "Scotsman" says: "The seriousness of the situation in Muscat and Oman lies in the clash of interests between King Saud and Britain, which sets Britain at odds with the United States."

KING SAUD

Questions On U.S. Arms Report

In Washington, the U.S. State Department spokesman, Mr. Lincoln White, said yesterday that the United States takes a "very dim view" of anything that tends to arouse tensions in the Arabian peninsula.

The United States does what it can informally to keep tempers quiet, he said.

Reporters questioned Mr. White about suggestions that U.S. arms might be in the hands of rebel tribesmen in Oman.

He replied: "Outside of

The New York "Herald-Tribune" says the British are convinced that Saudi Arabia has fostered the trouble in Oman.

Some sections of the British Press are already describing the revolt as a product of American oil ambitions in Arabia, the newspaper says, adding:

"This is no help to the situation. What is needed is close liaison and joint policy on the part of the United States and Britain, aimed at reducing the tensions that are always dangerous in this area."

The London "Daily Telegraph" says that pressure from Arab countries has forced two British oil companies to decide to cease operations in Israel.

The companies are the Shell Company and the British Petroleum Company.

The "Daily Telegraph" correspondent in Beirut says that much of the pressure against the companies' interests came from Saudi Arabia.

Leaflet Raids Planned

The R.A.F. today will drop leaflets calling on the Oman rebels to surrender, London newspapers report.

The leaflets will warn the rebels that, unless they leave the territory they have captured, R.A.F. jet planes will demonstrate their cannon firepower.

The "Daily Express" says that if the cannon demonstration fails to get results the jets will go into action against the tribesmen.

British troops stood by in Kenya and the Persian Gulf base of Sharjah this morning, ready to be flown in to help the Sultan.

Rift Over Uprising In Oman

From Our Staff Correspondent And A.A.P.

LONDON, July 23.— Fears are growing in Britain and the United States that the revolt in Oman will lead to new strains on Anglo-U.S. friendship.

Britain has promised to help the Sultan of Oman put down the revolt. Saudi Arabia, which is receiving U.S. military and economic aid, is reported to be backing the rebels.

Rival claims by British and U.S. oil companies in the Arabian peninsula are also complicating the situation.

Fifteen hundred tribesmen are in revolt against the pro-British Sultan of Oman.

Reports from Muscat, capital of Oman, say they have control of 5,000 square miles of the parched, rugged interior of the Sultanate.

British officers with the Sultan's forces say the rebels are armed with a variety of weapons, from ancient rifles to modern automatics.

The rebels are followers of the Imam (spiritual leader) of Oman, who tried to set up an independent State in Oman in 1955.

Talks With Dulles Welcomed

The "Daily Express" today welcomes the report that the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Harold Caccia, has seen the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. John Foster Dulles, on the Oman problem.

"On this issue, misunderstanding would be dangerous and to take the risk of it would be utterly irresponsible," the newspaper says.

"The Times" says: "The real danger is that hostilities in Oman could give the appearance of an Anglo-American rift, in view of the close links existing between America and Saudi Arabia and of the rival claims of British and American oil companies in this area."

The "Scotsman" says: "The seriousness of the situation in the tribesmen staging the revolt, which is "as pregnant with serious complications as Nasser's other moves."

KING SAUD

Muscat and Oman lies in the clash of interests between King Saud and Britain, which sets Britain at odds with the United States."

Questions On U.S. Arms Report

In Washington, the U.S. State Department spokesman, Mr. Lincoln White, said yesterday that the United States takes a "very dim view" of anything that tends to arouse tensions in the Arabian peninsula.

The United States does what it can informally to keep tempers quiet, he said.

Reporters questioned Mr. White about suggestions that U.S. arms might be in the hands of rebel tribesmen in Oman.

He replied: "Outside of those arms which we have sold to the Saudi Arabians, I do not know of any American arms in the area. But the purpose for which those arms are sold (to Saudi Arabia) are clearly defined."

A British spokesman in Washingon said there was no evidence to support any contention that American interests of any kind were behind the Oman revolt.

"Could Cause New Strains"

The "New York Times" says that the Imam of Oman was last known to have been in Saudi Arabia.

He is supposed to have returned to Oman from Saudi Arabia with what Britain's Foreign Secretary, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, has described as "modern arms from outside territories."

"This could range American-backed King Saud (of Saudi Arabia) against Britain and cause new strains between Britain and the United States," the "New York Times" says.

However, Cairo is the real headquarters of the revolt, says the newspaper.

Egypt's President Nasser is giving "aid and comfort" to

The "New York Times" adds: "The fruits of appeasement are beginning to sprout."

The New York "Herald-Tribune" says the British are convinced that Saudi Arabia has fostered the trouble in Oman.

Some sections of the British Press are already describing the revolt as a product of American oil ambitions in Arabia, the newspaper says, adding:

"This is no help to the situation. What is needed is close liaison and joint policy on the part of the United States and Britain, aimed at reducing the tensions that are always dangerous in this area."

The London "Daily Telegraph" says that pressure from Arab countries has forced two British oil companies to decide to cease operations in Israel.

The companies are the Shell Company and the British Petroleum Company.

The "Daily Telegraph" correspondent in Beirut says that much of the pressure against the companies' interests came from Saudi Arabia.

Leaflet Raids Planned

The R.A.F. today will drop leaflets calling on the Oman rebels to surrender, London newspapers report.

The leaflets will warn the rebels that, unless they leave the territory they have captured, R.A.F. jet planes will demonstrate their cannon firepower.

The "Daily Express" says that if the cannon demonstration fails to get results the jets will go into action against the tribesmen.

British troops stood by in Kenya and the Persian Gulf base of Sharjah this morning, ready to be flown in to help the Sultan.

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

H.P.MMc

OUTWARD CABLEGRAM.

Sent: 24th July 1957
2100

195/2.

TO:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

627. CONFIDENTIAL.

Please telegraph State Department's comments upon the situation in Oman, and any information you are able to obtain from the Department and British Embassy regarding Caccia's reported discussion with Dulles upon the subject.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
P.M.'s.

(COST £5.12.0)
25th July, 1957

SEC A/Ss UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA E.AF&ME E AF&ME INF DL MT

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Times File No. 195/2.

Published at London Date July 24 1957

MS

Action in Oman

MR. SELWYN LLOYD gave the House of Commons yesterday more precise information on action intended by the British Government in support of the SULTAN OF MUSCAT AND OMAN. They had authorized the Royal Air Force to make air strikes, but there was no question of large scale ground operations. They would try to cut off further deliveries of arms to the dissidents. They were keeping the United States Government in touch with the situation.

The British Government have three objectives to achieve. The first is to snuff out the rebellion locally before the dissidents can succeed in dispossessing the SULTAN and gaining control of an important part of the interior of Oman. It may well be that air strikes are the most effective way of doing this. The stone forts, rather like peel towers on the Scottish border, in which the rebels have established themselves, are easy targets to discern and attack. MR. SELWYN LLOYD was quite right when he cast doubts on the advisability of deploying European troops in the appalling damp heat of the locality at present. There is a chance that prompt action may confirm the SULTAN'S prestige and rally waverers to his cause.

Beyond that, it is essential to stop the further supply of arms. This will be much more difficult. Some of them come from Saudi Arabia across the sea of sand. This traffic is not easy to maintain, but, equally, it is not easy to spot or stop. Larger shipments come by dhow, either from the Red Sea or after transfer at points along the coast. This is a job for the Royal Navy, and a hard one. There are so many creeks and inlets where smugglers can creep in. The people in the best position to help in arresting this flow of arms are the American Government, for they still have influence at court in Saudi Arabia. Whoever is organizing the traffic, that is where the arms are coming from.

If both these measures fail serious developments may follow. Whoever touched off this particular little explosion —and it may well have been the former IMAM OF OMAN acting on his own—the people who have been supplying the arms and the money have larger objectives in view. The next step would be the Buraimi oasis, in the Trucial States, between Oman and the rich oil sheikhdoms of Bahrein and Kuwait. The nefarious traffic is not confined to Oman. It has been going on all along the coast. And all along the coast there are sheikhs under British protection watching to see if Britain is willing and able to protect her friends. For that reason Britain cannot afford to miss a trick. A flare-up along the Persian Gulf would quickly reopen many old wounds and once more unsettle the whole Middle East just at a time when it seemed to be gaining some stability.

THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DIGITISED IN SECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2.

Published at Sydney Date July 23 1957

over the back for Oil is The Key To The Oman Revolt

...erald.

TIDES (Fort Denison): High, 4.28 a.m. (3ft 11in), 5.03 p.m. (5ft 4in). Low, 10.18 a.m. (1ft 7in), 11.40 p.m. (1ft 6in).

20 PAGES SYDNEY, TUESDAY, JULY 23, 1957

U.K. Troops Stand By In Oman

LONDON, July 22 (A.A.P.-Reuter). British troops and planes are standing by in Oman awaiting orders to help quell the rebellion in the British-protected oil-rich Sultanate.

Yesterday British military and diplomatic leaders in the area flew to Muscat to discuss what steps may be necessary.

However, they still hope that the Sultan's own forces will be able to cope with the situation.

They conferred with the Sultan on measures to regain control of Central Oman from the rebels of the former Imam (spiritual leader) of Oman, Sheik Galeb Bin Ali, who was expelled from the area in December, 1955, and is reported to be in neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

Gains By Rebels

The Sultanate of Oman with the neighbouring seven-State Trucial Oman lies along the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula.

Press dispatches from the Oman border say that the followers of the deposed Imam have thrown the Sultan's forces out of Nizwa, ancient capital of Oman, and the neighbouring town of Firq.

Nizwa is about 200 miles inland and some 120 miles south-east of the Buraimi Oasis area, reputed to be rich in oil, which has been in dispute between Britain and Saudi Arabia for some years.

The dispatches say that the rebels now control 5,000 square miles of mountain region and have thus regained control of the district, which has been the focal point of support for the Imam, who aims at establishing an independent State around Nizwa.

According to a British Foreign Office official on the Oman border, the rebels are fairly well organised and the fighting is on terrain unsuitable for any form of mechanised warfare.

British Troop Moves

Small-scale precautionary movements of British troops and aircraft have taken place since the Sultan's request for aid.

British military authorities announced that:

● A company of the First Battalion, Cameronians, has arrived at Sharjah, 200 miles north of the centre of the uprising, from the oil island base of Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf.

● The Sharjah base which may become the assembly [illegible] placed at the disposal of the British Commander in the Arabian Peninsular region, Air Vice-Marshal Laurence Sinclair, who is in charge of British aid to the Sultan.

The plans have been sent to Air Vice-Marshal Sinclair's headquarters at Aden, about 950 miles from the centre of the rising, from R.A.F. transports available in Cyprus and Iraq.

● Two Royal Navy frigates are now off the Muscat coast to protect British lives and property.

Leaders Fly To Talks

Air Vice-Marshal Sinclair and the British political agent in Bahrein, Mr. Charles Gault, flew to Muscat for yesterday's conference.

Mr. Gault said the Sultan had asked for British help to meet the challenge to his authority, and the meeting dealt with the form that this assistance might take.

A British liaison official in Muscat said that the Sultan's forces have suffered some casualties in skirmishes with the rebels, but that there were no casualties among the British officers leading the forces.

A British oil exploration party working for Petroleum Development (Oman), an affiliate of the Iraq Petroleum Company, has been cut off by rebel activities from normal land communications with their headquarters in Muscat.

But the official said that the party was in no danger at present. It was being supplied by air and, in the event of imminent danger, would be evacuated by air.

In Cairo today the semi-official newspaper, "Al Gom-

COLUMN 8

ONE of the Asian students arrived at the School of Commerce at Sydney Tech. yesterday looking a bit seedy.

A lecturer asked him what was the trouble.

"I think I've caught some of that Australian flu," he said.

★ ★ ★

MEMORIAL. Eastwood is organising a Granny Smith festival for September to honour the lady who gave us the famous Granny Smith apple.

As a memorial to her, it has decided upon a ladies' amenities centre —the outward feature of which is to be a 5ft plastic apple which can be illuminated at night.

★ ★ ★

A NEWTOWN shopkeeper displays in his window a framed photograph of a blue cattle dog with the legend, "Do you know where Bluey is?"

Bluey had lived along the footpaths and in doorways in Newtown for about 15 years, but recently disappeared.

The old cattle dog is believed to have fallen from a lorry when quite young.

He had scores of friends, including children, many of whom fed him regularly—so well, indeed, that Bluey was described as "the best-fed dog in Newtown."

★ ★ ★

YESTERDAY a man of many years was driving a horse and sulky through French's Forest with a schoolboy as a passenger—both out to beat the bus strike.

★ ★ ★

LOST LETTER. T.A.A. is in a bit of a spot.

It has misplaced a letter from a crippled woman in Manly — who can write only by holding the pen in her teeth—inquiring about a tour of Alice Springs.

T.A.A. doesn't know her name or address, but in the circumstance is particularly anxious to reply to her.

★ ★ ★

Stand By In Oman

LONDON, July 22 (A.A.P.-Reuter). British troops and planes are standing by in Oman awaiting orders to help quell the rebellion in the British-protected oil-rich Sultanate.

Yesterday British military and diplomatic leaders in the area flew to Muscat to discuss what steps may be necessary.

However, they still hope that the Sultan's own forces will be able to cope with the situation.

They conferred with the Sultan on measures to regain control of Central Oman from the rebels of the former Imam (spiritual leader) of Oman, Sheik Galeb Bin Ali, who was expelled from the area in December, 1955, and is reported to be in neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

Gains By Rebels

The Sultanate of Oman with the neighbouring seven-State Trucial Oman lies along the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula.

Press dispatches from the Oman border say that the followers of the deposed Imam have thrown the Sultan's forces out of Nizwa, ancient capital of Oman, and the neighbouring town of Firq.

Nizwa is about 200 miles inland and some 120 miles south-east of the Buraimi Oasis area, reputed to be rich in oil, which has been in dispute between Britain and Saudi Arabia for some years.

The dispatches say that the rebels now control 5,000 square miles of mountain region and have thus regained control of the district, which has been the focal point of support for the Imam, who aims at establishing an independent State around Nizwa.

According to a British Foreign Office official on the Oman border, the rebels are fairly well organised and the fighting is on terrain unsuitable for any form of mechanised warfare.

British Troop Moves

Small-scale precautionary movements of British troops and aircraft have taken place since the Sultan's request for aid.

British military authorities announced that:

- A company of the First Battalion, Cameronians, has arrived at Sharjah, 200 miles north of the centre of the uprising, from the oil island base of Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf.
- The Sharjah base which may become the assembly point for the Cameronians if they are reinforced from Kenya, is equipped with Venom jet fighters.
- About 100 other troops of the First Battalion, Cameronians, are standing by at Gilgil, 80 miles from Nairobi, in readiness for an early move to the trouble area.

A "small number" of R.A.F. transport planes have been placed at the disposal of the British Commander in the Arabian Peninsular region. Air Vice-Marshal Laurence Sinclair, who is in charge of British aid to the Sultan.

The plans have been sent to Air Vice-Marshal Sinclair's headquarters at Aden, about 950 miles from the centre of the rising, from R.A.F. transports available in Cyprus and Iraq.

- Two Royal Navy frigates are now off the Muscat coast to protect British lives and property.

Leaders Fly To Talks

Air Vice-Marshal Sinclair and the British political agent in Bahrein, Mr. Charles Gault, flew to Muscat for yesterday's conference.

Mr. Gault said the Sultan had asked for British help to meet the challenge to his authority, and the meeting dealt with the form that this assistance might take.

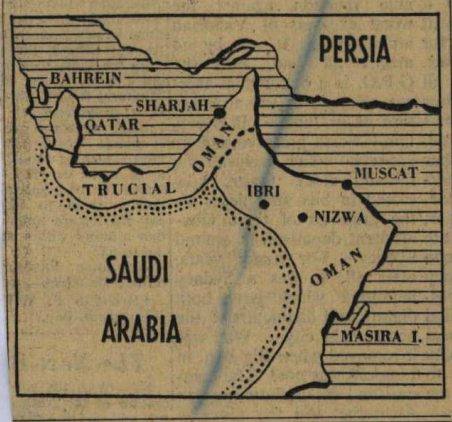
A British liaison official in Muscat said that the Sultan's forces have suffered some casualties in skirmishes with the rebels, but that there were no casualties among the British officers leading the forces.

A British oil exploration party working for Petroleum Development (Oman), an affiliate of the Iraq Petroleum Company, has been cut off by rebel activities from normal land communications with their headquarters in Muscat.

But the official said that the party was in no danger at present. It was being supplied by air and, in the event of imminent danger, would be evacuated by air.

In Cairo today the semi-official newspaper, "Al Gomhouria," said that the secretary-general of the Arab League, Mr. Abdel Khalek Hassouna, "is making contacts with member States of the Arab League to enlist their support in the struggle against British imperialism in Muscat and Oman."

● Britain Reported Reluctant, Page 3.



ONE of the Asian students arrived at the School of Commerce at Sydney Tech. yesterday looking a bit seedy.

A lecturer asked him what was the trouble.

"I think I've caught some of that Australian flu," he said.

★ ★ ★

MEMORIAL. Eastwood is organising a Granny Smith festival for September to honour the lady who gave us the famous Granny Smith apple.

As a memorial to her, it has decided upon a ladies' amenities centre —the outward feature of which is to be a 5ft plastic apple which can be illuminated at night.

★ ★ ★

A NEWTOWN shopkeeper displays in his window a framed photograph of a blue cattle dog with the legend, "Do you know where Bluey is?"

Bluey had lived along the footpaths and in doorways in Newtown for about 15 years, but recently disappeared.

The old cattle dog is believed to have fallen from a lorry when quite young.

He had scores of friends, including children, many of whom fed him regularly—so well, indeed, that Bluey was described as "the best-fed dog in Newtown."

★ ★ ★

YESTERDAY a man of many years was driving a horse and sulky through French's Forest with a schoolboy as a passenger—both out to beat the bus strike.

★ ★ ★

LOST LETTER. T.A.A. is in a bit of a spot.

It has misplaced a letter from a crippled woman in Manly — who can write only by holding the pen in her teeth—inquiring about a tour of Alice Springs.

T.A.A. doesn't know her name or address, but in the circumstance is particularly anxious to reply to her.

★ ★ ★

SYDNEY waterside-workers are on a wonderful wicket.

Six years ago I mentioned that their fine office building in Sussex Street had been let to them rent free by the State Government for the preceding 15 years.

Official reports were called for but—well, they're still getting it rent free—or, to be exact, for £1 a year.

Today's valuation of the building would be about £40,000—having just about doubled in the last six years.

★ ★ ★

BOXING the Compass. Professor and Mrs. R. Smith, of Armidale, have received a letter from the United States addressed to 186 Taylor Street, Armidale, North South West Australia.

195/2.

Text of Commonwealth Relations Office Telegram Circular W. No.631. dated 23rd July, 1957.

Addressed to United Kingdom High Commissioner Ottawa, repeated to United Kingdom High Commissioner, Canberra.

Your telegram No.650
(not to all)

You will have seen my telegram W. No.629 which sets out further points for guidance. We are considering whether Sultan should himself make a public statement that he had requested United Kingdom assistance but there are difficulties in this.

Americans were informed on 19th July that this revolt had taken place and that Sultan had requested our assistance. Mr. Dulles asked to be kept informed of developments but made no further comment. State Department said that there could be no doubt that the troublemakers must have been assisted from outside.

CONFIDENTIAL

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM

CIRCULAR W NO. 629 DATED 23RD JULY, 1957.

OMAN.

You may use the following points in conversation.

1. Sultan is an Independent Sovereign in close relations with United Kingdom. He has made formal request to us in writing for assistance.

2. We are under no treaty obligation to go to his assistance. The dissidents have however clearly received assistance from outside the Territories of the Sultan and a refusal on our part to meet the effects of Egyptian machinations and Saudi gun-running would undermine our whole position on the Trucial coast. It would be regarded by those States with which we have treaty obligations of defence as evidence that we were unable to carry out our responsibilities in the area.

3. We are determined to maintain stability in Persian Gulf.

4. Question facing us is what effective action we can take to restore situation and to prevent further deterioation.

5. We must act quickly and effectively to reassure the Sultan's supporters who are numerous. When the Sultan reasserted his authority in December 1955 sheikhs from all parts of the Sultanate offered their loyalty to him in Muscat and on their behalf as well as the Rulers we must make it clear that we do not propose to leave a free field to Egyptian intrigues and Saudi intervention. If we do this rapidly the whole scope of military operations can be restricted and unnecessary fighting and blood-shed avoided.

6. The most rapid and effective action open to us is air demonstration to hold position until Sultan's Forces are in a position to reassert themselves.

7. Operations are on a minute scale. Very few aeroplanes are involved and no British troops are yet committed. The whole incident would be nothing more than tribal intrigue and rivalries between tribal leaders and of nothing but local and temporary

were it not for Egyptian and Saudi support. We hope to put an end to it quickly and without drawing too much attention publicly to the part plated by Saudi Arabia. It remains our intention to improve our relations with King Saud as quickly as circumstances permit.

8. If asked you may say that we have kept the United States Government fully informed of the progress of events and of our policy.

Mr Kelly

Text of Urgent Presse telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office Circular W. No. 634 dated 24th July, 1957.

O M A N.

My immediately preceding telegram.

Following points were made by Foreign Secretary in answer to supplementaries.

2. Mr. Bevan asked whether if Saudi Arabia was involved steps had been taken to approach the United States Government about supplies of arms. I said "We know that certain arms must have been smuggled into the country from outside because modern arms have been found in the possession of the dissidents. From where those arms come we do not know. We have certain suspicions. The most effective method of dealing with the situation is to see that the means of entry for further arms are closed off and that we propose to do. I am not yet in a position to say anything about allegations against a particular foreign country. As for discussions with the United States Government they have been kept in close touch with the situation".

3. Mr. Bevan asked further if it would not be desirable that the United States Government should influence the Saudi Arabian Government to make a statement deprecating violence. I replied "We are in touch with the United States Government about these matters. I do not think that any useful purpose is served by making allegations against particular governments at this moment. I agree that we have to seek to stop the movement of further arms into this area and to induce other governments/or individuals not to supply those arms".

4. Mr. A. Henderson asked whether it was not true that Saudi Arabia had been supplying arms and that this was in contravention of

/the

the United Nations Charter and whether it would not therefore be desirable to send United Nations Observers into the area. I replied "That is obviously an aspect of the matter which we have to discuss with our allies. It has been discussed with our allies but I certainly have no further statement to make upon it. We are continuing to do our best to see that the area is sealed off and that no further arms get in. I do not think that United Nations Observers will serve a useful purpose in this case".

5. In answer to a question by Mr. Grimond on our obligations under the Treaties I said inter alia "The action Her Majesty's Government have taken in this case is not novel. There are precedents for it. In 1930 when there was a Labour Government British naval vessels were authorised to bombard the Northern Muscat Coast where the Chief Shaikh of Khassab had defied the Sultan's authority. That action took place and the Shaikh submitted to the Sultan's authority. Similar action was taken under another Government in 1932."

6. Mr. Peart asked if it was not important to know what Aramco was doing since this Company had previously been supposed to give support against British interests and whether it was not vital therefore to consult with the United States Government. I replied "Those consultations are taking place".

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper Daily Telegraph File No. 196/2

Published at Sydney Date July 23 1957

ME

Battle on for the mud huts (and oil) of Oman

by Dr. EMERY BARCS

UNTIL 18 months ago, bearded, corpulent Imam Ghaleb, leader of the present rebellion in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, was an obscure minor Arab chieftain.

His capital, Nizwah, in the arid and desert hinterland of the Sultanate is politely called a town. Really, Nizwah is just a collection of huts made of sun-baked mud brick of which Imam Ghaleb's former "palace" is the largest.

There the Imam lived with his wives and concubines. He owned a few camel herds and a few hundred date-palms. Compared with his few thousand subjects — mainly nomads and miserable peasants—he was rich.

Once or twice a year he made a camel trip to Muscat, capital of the Sultanate on the Persian Gulf, to pay his respects to his lord, 47-year-old Sayid Said Ibn Taimur, sovereign of Muscat and Oman.

IMAM GHALEB seemed an unlikely person to challenge any of Britain's vital interests.

Yet, in December, 1955, the British-officered troops of the Sultan had to hurry to Nizwah to prevent the Imam from staging a coup which—if successful—would have hit Britain where it really hurts.

Ghaleb wanted to proclaim his thousands of square miles of desert and few spots of green oases an independent State under the protection of Saudi Arabia.

This would have meant that the oil deposits, which British experts had discovered in the Nizwah area, would have come under the control of Saudi Arabia and the American oil interests which have the sole right to exploit the oil resources of the Saudian kingdom.

Sultan Ibn Taimur's forces occupied Nizwah without firing a shot. Imam Ghaleb, warned in time, jumped on his fastest *meharo* and fled first to King Saud's capital, Riyad, then to Cairo.

Now he is back in business. Supported by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and allegedly financed by American oil interests, he has staged a full-scale rebellion. His rebels seem to be well armed and well led.

Britain is now rushing R.A.F. units and other forces to help Sultan Ibn Taimur against the Imam and his more powerful backers.

For the stake is not the ownership of a lot of desert sand and stone, but the oil deposits which are believed to lie under that useless wasteland.

Britain has clear rights to this oil.

For more than 150 years Britain has maintained close and friendly relations with the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, a poor and backward Arab State at the south-western tip of the Persian Gulf.

The country is about the size of Victoria, but has an estimated population of only about 600,000. Dates and camels are the main products, and the value of total foreign trade (export and import) is less than £4,000,000 a year.

BY and large, life in the Sultanate has changed little during the past few centuries. Transport and communication are still mostly on camel-back, and the total length of roads which motor cars can "negotiate" in the dry season is 260 miles.

Except for the usual tribal wars, the Sultanate lived peacefully with its neighbors—the small Trucial Sheikdoms in the north, the Saudian Kingdom to the west, and the Protectorate of Aden in the south-west.

The discovery of oil in the Arabian Peninsula before World War II, however, changed this somnolent security. Suddenly regions which had been "empty quarters" since time immemorial became potentially enormously valuable.

American oil interests secured rights to search for oil (and to exploit whatever they found) in Saudi Arabia. Britain secured similar rights in the Sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf, and—in 1937—in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.

All went reasonably well until about eight years ago when reports reached the Western capitals that British geologists had found important oil deposits near the oases of Buraimi, and in the region of Nizwah.

Immediately (and for the first time in known history) the Saudi Arabians announced that Buraimi belonged to them because for centuries they had collected the *zekkat* (religious tithe) from the people of the oases.

When the Sultan of Muscat and Oman (backed by Britain) refused to accept this claim, Saudi Arabia decided on direct action, and at the end of 1952 occupied the oases by force.

A few months later, however, when Britain threatened reprisals the Saudi forces evacuated Buraimi "pending the verdict of a Court of Arbitration" set up in January, 1955, by mutual agreement between Britain, the Sultanate, and Saudi Arabia.

WHAT followed was a farce, not a genuine attempt to accept international arbitration.

As Sir Hartley Shawcross, Britain's chief counsel before the Court proved, Saudi Arabia tried to bribe or intimidate all main witnesses who were called to give evidence.

A key witness (the Sheik of Abu Dhabi) was offered £30,000,000 if he gave "successful testimony" oefore the learned arbitrators.

The attempt at arbitration was a complete failure. In the middle of 1955 Saudi Arabia again tried to occupy Buraimi, but in October the Saudi forces were thrown out by units of the army of Muscat and Oman under the leadership of British officers.

Two months later, in December, 1955, Imam Ghaleb tried to stage his coup.

After that the struggle for the oil deposits of Muscat and Oman came to a temporary rest. Britain remained on the stage, and began to prepare to produce oil in the Sultanate.

Now, however, the fight is on again.

So far no official evidence has been produced to prove that American oil men have master-minded and financed the various phases of this fight. But no one of importance has tried to refute charges that they did.

Which may be discreet and diplomatic, but hardly a great help to those who value British - American friendship and who would like to see the future clearly even if it meant calling a spade—a shovel.

THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DIGITISED IN SECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper Daily Telegraph File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date July 23, 1957

ME.

AT ACTION STATIONS AS MID-EAST CRISIS GROWS

British troops, planes alert on Arab threat

LONDON, Mon. — British troops and planes were ready for action today in face of threatened Arab League intervention in the Oman rebellion.

Rebels have taken over most of the British-protected Sultanate of Oman, on the Persian Gulf.

The Secretary-General of the Arab League (Abdel Khalek Hassouna) conferred today with a rebel official in Cairo.

The official is the director of the Oman Immamate Bureau (Mohamed el Harty).

The two officials discussed the "nationalist uprising in Oman and Muscat."

The Egyptian semi-official newspaper Al Gomhouriah says:

"Hassouna is making contacts with member States of the Arab League to enlist their support in the struggle against British imperialism."

In London today the War Office confirmed that a company of Cameron Highlanders had been alerted at Bahrein and was expected to move to Sharjah, 200 miles north of the trouble area in Oman.

The Royal Air Force is reported to be flying Vampire and Hunter jet fighters from Aden.

The rebels are reported to control large tracts of Oman, a desert sheikhdom on the southern fringe of Saudi Arabia.

They are followers of the Imam of Oman, a religious leader who claims that he and not the Sultan is the protectorate's real ruler.

Comeback

The Sultan, with his British-officered army of 2000, drove the Imam out of his desert stronghold last year into the interior.

But last week the Imam came back with a new following and rapidly gained control of practically all the protectorate's interior.

Latest reports say the rebels hold approximately 5000 square miles of mountains.

The rebels so far have not taken any areas of strategic importance.

The Sultan still controls the coastline.

But the Imam's followers are astride the important trade route between Muscat and the inland Buraimi Oasis, an oil-rich focal point for trade coming into the protectorate and the neighboring Trucial States from Saudi-Arabia.

Seized

The rebels have captured Nizwa and the neighboring town of Firq.

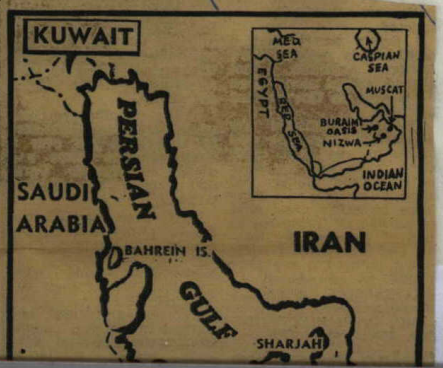
The towns are in the heart of the Jebel Al Akhdar Mountains, in the northern part of the State.

The rebels are also believed to have taken Ibri, 60 miles away.

The fighting area is totally unsuited to any form of mechanical warfare.

The rebel tribesmen are going into action painted with blue dye and with matted hair hanging to their waists. — A.A.P.-R., U.P.

● BATTLE FOR OIL OF OMAN, PAGE 15.



ME.

AT ACTION STATIONS AS MID-EAST CRISIS GROWS

British troops, planes alert on Arab threat

LONDON, Mon. — British troops and planes were ready for action today in face of threatened Arab League intervention in the Oman rebellion.

Rebels have taken over most of the British-protected Sultanate of Oman, on the Persian Gulf.

The Secretary-General of the Arab League (Abdel Khalek Hassouna) conferred today with a rebel official in Cairo.

The official is the director of the Oman Immamate Bureau (Mohamed el Harty).

The two officials discussed the "nationalist uprising in Oman and Muscat."

The Egyptian semi-official newspaper Al Gomhouriah says:

"Hassouna is making contacts with member States of the Arab League to enlist their support in the struggle against British imperialism."

In London today the War Office confirmed that a company of Cameron Highlanders had been alerted at Bahrein and was expected to move to Sharjah, 200 miles north of the trouble area in Oman.

The Royal Air Force is reported to be flying Vampire and Hunter jet fighters from Aden.

The rebels are reported to control large tracts of Oman, a desert sheikhdom on the southern fringe of Saudi Arabia.

They are followers of the Imam of Oman, a religious leader who claims that he and not the Sultan is the protectorate's real ruler.

Comeback

The Sultan, with his British-officered army of 2000, drove the Imam out of his desert stronghold last year into the interior.

But last week the Imam came back with a new following and rapidly gained control of practically all the protectorate's interior.

Latest reports say the rebels hold approximately 5000 square miles of mountains.

The Sultan has appealed to Britain for help under the terms of the agreement which makes Oman a British protectorate.

British advisers flew to Muscat, the Sultan's capital, yesterday.

The rebels so far have not taken any areas of strategic importance.

The Sultan still controls the coastline.

But the Imam's followers are astride the important trade route between Muscat and the inland Buraimi Oasis, an oil-rich focal point for trade coming into the protectorate and the neighboring Trucial States from Saudi-Arabia.

Seized

The rebels have captured Nizwa and the neighboring town of Firq.

The towns are in the heart of the Jebel Al Akhdar Mountains, in the northern part of the State.

The rebels are also believed to have taken Ibri, 60 miles away.

The fighting area is totally unsuited to any form of mechanical warfare.

The rebel tribesmen are going into action painted with blue dye and with matted hair hanging to their waists. — A.A.P.-R., U.P.

● BATTLE FOR OIL OF OMAN, PAGE 15.

Arabs rebelling against the Sultan of Oman are reported to have captured NIZWA. British troops from BAHREIN Island, in the Persian Gulf, are ready to move to SHARJAH. Inset map at top right shows the Oman area in relation to the troubled Middle East.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Financial Times File No. 195/2

Published at London Date July 23 1957

Trouble in Oman

M.E.

By a Financial Times Correspondent

THE revolt which has broken out in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman has every appearance of being a repetition of the situation which existed at the end of 1955. At that time the province of Oman had not been under the effective control of the Sultan—Said bin Taimur—for some 40 years.

The local tribes rebelled in 1913, and effective control since then was by an elected leader, the Imam. The holder of this position in 1955—Ghalib bin Ali—attempted to make the Oman an independent State with Saudi Arabian and Egyptian support. However, as the result of a largely bloodless campaign—six tribesmen were killed—the Sultan reasserted his authority. The political organisation of the country is patriarchal, and the Sultan has absolute power over his subjects.

Ghalib bin Ali was apparently allowed to remain in the Sultanate, although his brother, Talib, escaped to Saudi Arabia. It is believed that both are leading the present revolt, which is centred again around Nazwa, in Central Oman.

Independent State

ALTHOUGH Muscat and Oman is often looked upon as one of the British protected territories in the Persian Gulf; it is an independent State. For example, Bahrain and the Trucial Coast by treaty leave their foreign affairs to the U.K., but the Sultan of Muscat and Oman directs his own. However, the relationship between the Sultan and the U.K. has been close for some 150 years, and the traditional association was confirmed by a new treaty in 1951. There is a resident British Consul-General, who—together with the political agents in the protectorates—is subordinate to the Political Resident at Bahrain, the senior British official in the Gulf.

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman's army is commanded by retired British officers. The Sultan—who has been on the throne for 25 years—has always leaned heavily on British advice and support. This was particularly useful when Said bin Taimur had to deal with his powerful Saudi Arabian neighbour—as in the Buraimi oasis dispute at the end of 1955.

Muscat and Oman occupies an area of about 82,000 square miles. The population is estimated at 550,000, 5,500 of whom live in the capital—Muscat Town. Cereal crops are grown for local consumption, and limes, dates and pomegranates are the chief export crops. In the province of Dhofar, cattle and camel breeding is practised. The external trade of the country is largely with India, Pakistan, the U.K. and the Persian Gulf sheikdoms.

There are no local industries of much importance in Muscat and Oman, but oil exploration is being fairly vigorously pursued. A concession to a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company—Petroleum Development (Oman and Dhofar)—was granted in 1937, to run for 75 years and covering the whole area. However, the company gave up its Dhofar concession in March, 1951, and changed its name to Petroleum Development (Oman). Dhofar was given up as "not worth pursuing." However, two U.S. oil companies—Cities Service and Richfield Oil—formed the Dhofar Cities Service Petroleum Corporation (each holding 50 per cent.) and in 1953 took over in Dhofar. The concession is due to expire in 25 years from the date of commercial production, with the option to renew for an additional 25 years.

So far, exploration and drilling has yielded little result. I.P.C. sunk a well at Jebel Fahud in Central Oman, but this has now been abandoned after having reached a depth of 12,000 feet. Despite this, I.P.C. are maintaining the search—at an estimated cost of £3½m. a year—and it is thought that better results may come from the Oman mountains, which are a continuation of the oil bearing Zagros range in Iran.

The location of the Jebel Fahud well presented extreme difficulties. To the north and west is desert and on the east the Oman mountains are up to about 10,000 feet high. Some equipment had to be brought in by air-lift, some by a 900-mile sea route followed by a 350-mile journey across the desert.

Unsuccessful Test Wells

IN the south, at Dhofar, Cities Service has had similar difficulties. Three test wells have been drilled—all unsuccessfully. One was abandoned at 8,500 feet, a nother at almost 12,000 feet. The third, although it was ultimately abandoned at 9,800 feet, did yield "encouraging oil shows." A fourth test well—Mazraq-2—is now being drilled. There are, so far, no offshore oil concessions or explorations off the Oman coast, though Shell is working in the eastern offshore waters of Qatar, and British Petroleum and Compagnie Française des Pétroles in the offshore waters of the Trucial Coast.

OIL EXPLORATION IN S.E. ARABIA

Area	Company	What has been done
Muscat and Oman	Petroleum Development (Oman) (Subsidiary of I.P.C.).	First test well drilled at Fahud abandoned. Exploration to select another site.
Dhofar	Dhofar Cities Service Petroleum Cpn. (50-50 holding by Cities Service and Richfield Oil).	Three wells — abandoned. Another drilling.
Trucial Coast	Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) (Subsidiary of I.P.C.).	Four wells drilled at Ras Sadr, Murban, Jebel Ali and Gezira—all abandoned. One well still drilling at Shuweihat. One well planned in Sharjah later this year.
Offshore Trucial Coast	Abu Dhabi Marine Areas (BP two thirds, C.F.B. one-third).	Spending £5m. on a first deep test next year.
Offshore Qatar	Shell.	Two wells drilled—both dry—at cost of £7½m. Preparing to drill third.
"Empty quarter" of Saudi Arabia	Aramco.	One well drilled—abandoned.

K.C.G. KEVIN ESQ.,

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

With the Compliments

of the

Official Secretary

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom,
Canberra, A. C. T.

1952

Text of Commonwealth Relations Office Telegram Circular W.No.633 dated 23rd July, 1957.

My Telegram Circular W. No. 630

OMAN

Following is text of Foreign Secretary's statement in Commons to-day. Begins.

2. I undertook yesterday to inform the House of any further developments in the situation in Central Oman. I have received little further information about the situation on the ground but the military preparations to which I have referred have continued.

3. It will perhaps help the House to form a judgment on these matters if I remind the House about the nature of the area in which the disturbances have taken place. The Central Oman is a mountainous area the highest mountains rising to 9000 feet. It is surrounded by desert where the present temperatures are up to 120 degrees. There is no front line but rather a constantly shifting pattern of tribal allegiances and defections with minor armed skirmishes.

4. There is no question therefore of large-scale operations by British troops on the ground.

5. As I said yesterday discretion has been given to our local military authorities to take any necessary action on their own initiative within certain limits. So far as the Royal Air Force is concerned this includes leaflet dropping on behalf of the Sultan together with action against certain forts in the area held by dissident tribesmen. These forts manned by tribesmen equipped with modern arms smuggled in

/from

from outside the country are capable of intimidating both loyal and wavering tribes. I would emphasise that action has only been authorised against certain military targets.

6. The real issue is not the scale of the military operations but the fact that Her Majesty's Government intend to give full support to the Sultan.

Ends.

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM

W NO. 632 DATED 23RD JULY, 1957.

O M A N.

My telegram W No. 625. Following three paragraphs are the text of Foreign Secretary's reply to a question in Parliament yesterday.

2. Disturbances have recently been taking place in Central Oman a remote and difficult area in Arabia over which the Sultan of Muscat and Oman re-established his authority at the end of 1955. These disturbances have been stimulated by the former Iman of Oman whom the Sultan allowed to retire peaceably in 1955 to a village in the area. The former Iman and his brother Talib appear to have managed to acquire a limited quantity of arms and have been trying to persuade some of the local tribesmen to defect against the authority of the Sultan. While they have had some initial success the unrest still remains localised.

3. The Sultan of Muscat and Oman has requested British assistance and this request has been agreed to stop The local British authorities are considering with him the best form which this might take. They have been given discretion within certain limits to take military action. Small scale precautionary movements of our forces have already taken place. I will keep the House informed of further developments.

4. The reasons for this action are that the dissidents have clearly received assistance from outside the Territories of the Sultan. It is therefore in the view of Her Majesty's Government right that we should respond to the Sultan's request for help. We have friendly treaty relations with the Sultan and his predecessors for the past 150 years.

....5/

5. In answers to supplementary questions Foreign Secretary made the following points

(a) As far a s we know no British troops were at present on Muscat soil;

(b) We have no reasons to expect any trouble arising from armed incursions by Saudi Arabia into Abu Dhabi;

(c) there is no question of there being in adequate transport facilities to lift the British Forces required;

(d) in reply to a request for an assurance that there would be American support for British policy Secretary said: "I do not think that question arises. We have decided to take the action we have because of the long traditions of friendship between the Sultan and ourselves".

(e) We are not taking action under a treaty obligation. We have no obligation to deal with internal affairs in the Territory of Muscat. We have certain duties in respect of External Affairs but not in respect of Internal Affairs. We are giving the full support which we think a staunch friend requires Foreign Secretary replied: "certainly not" when asked if he would give an assurance that British troops aircraft and ships would not be engaged until the House had been told in advance;

(g) we have no knowledge that the arms concerned in Oman are of American origin. All that we know is that there are modern arms in the area which must have come from outside the Territories of Muscat.

SECRET

SECRET.

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM

CIRCULAR W. NO. 630 DATED 23RD JULY, 1957.

My telegram Circular W. No. 625.

OMAN.

In addition to measures outlined in paragraph 2 of my telegram under reference we have agreed that at a later stage bombing may be used if necessary to demolish the selected forts. Warning is to be given before each attack and time is to be allowed after each series of attacks to test their efficiency. Air action will be accompanied by maximum possible political effort by Sultan to rally the allegiance of his subjects and to invite submission by the rebels.

2. Above may be communicated to Commonwealth authorities at your discretion emphasising secrecy. We hope shortly to send you summary of Foreign Secretary's statement in Parliament today.

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Sydney Morning Herald File No. 195/2

Published at Sydney Date July 23 1957

ME

BRITAIN REPORTED RELUCTANT ON OMAN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LONDON, July 22 —Foreign Office sources have made it clear that the British Government hopes that the Muscat rebellion can be controlled without direct British military intervention, says the London correspondent of the New York "Herald Tribune."

The correspondent says that Britain is reluctant to intervene, because she does not want to set off a wave of "imperialistic" charges in the Middle East and undo the slow rebuilding of confidence in British policy and motives in that part of the world.

Diplomatic observers in London say that the Muscat crisis presents Britain with the trickiest policy problem she has faced in the Middle East since the Suez crisis.

Two years ago the Imam of Oman launched a similar rebellion against the Sultan of Muscat and Oman but was driven into Saudi Arabia by the British-led forces of the Sultan's private army.

Later the British led the occupation of the Buraimi Oasis which is claimed by both the Sultan and Saudi Arabia's King Saud.

Some observers believe it was at this point that King Saud began to spend huge sums to undermine British prestige and authority in the Middle East and turned to form a close alliance with President Nasser of Egypt.

Moved Away From Nasser

Recently, however, King Saud has moved further and further away from President Nasser and, in his support for King Hussein of Jordan, the healing of the long Hashemite feud with King Feisal or Iraq and his friendliness with America, has shown increasing support for the West.

British intervention, observers believe, might reverse this trend particularly as it is believed that the Muscat rebellion is backed by Saudi arms and money and possibly involves Saudi troops.

On the other hand Britain has always maintained that the treaty arrangements she has with various rulers along the Persian Gulf coast are essential.

The rulers of the oil-rich areas of Bahrein and Kuwait —as well as the potential rich areas still unexplored and untapped but under British protection—must have confidence in Britain's willingness to support them.

The "Herald Tribune" correspondent, however, says: "Britain is under no direct obligation to help the Sultan and there is some opinion in the Foreign Office that it is more important to keep improving relations with King Saud than to maintain the old and probably outmoded commitments of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman."

SECRET

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE

TELEGRAM NO. W 625 DATED 22ND JULY 1957.

My telegram Z No. 43.

OMAN.

It has become clear that the most effective support which we can give to the Sultan at this stage is by air action. The aims of an air operation would be

(a) to reduce the morale of the rebels and increase that of the friendly tribes to a point where cooperation with the Sultan's Forces would permit reoccupation of key points without undue difficulty;

(b) to demonstrate the power of the weapons at the Sultan's disposal and to convince them that further resistance would be fruitless and would lead only to hardship;

(c) without inflicting casualties to show the population the consequences of supporting the rebels.

2. Authority has therefore been given to the United Kingdom Military Commander in the area to authorise certain air action. This will take the form of strikes with cannon and rockets against a few forts in Oman after due warning has been given. Demonstration flights and leaflet dropping will also take place.

3. Apart from military plans the Sultan is using his influence to win back the loyalty of the dissident tribesmen. We hope that these operations will succeed in sealing off the dissident area. Rulers in the trucial states have urged

SECRET

SECRET

the harm to our position if we refuse to intervene. A failure by the Sultan to re-establish his authority soon would have grave results in the other States of which Egyptian propaganda could be expected to make the most.

SECRET

Text of Commonwealth Relations Office Telegram Circular W. No.631. dated 23rd July, 1957.

Addressed to United Kingdom High Commissioner Ottawa, repeated to United Kingdom High Commissioner, Canberra.

Your telegram No.650
(not to all)

You will have seen my telegram W. No.629 which sets out further points for guidance. We are considering whether Sultan should himself make a public statement that he had requested United Kingdom assistance but there are difficulties in this.

Americans were informed on 19th July that this revolt had taken place and that Sultan had requested our assistance. Mr. Dulles asked to be kept informed of developments but made no further comment. State Department said that there could be no doubt that the troublemakers must have been assisted from outside.

CONFIDENTIAL

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM

CIRCULAR W NO. 629 DATED 23RD JULY, 1957.

OMAN.

You may use the following points in conversation.

1. Sultan is an Independent Sovereign in close relations with United Kingdom. He has made formal request to us in writing for assistance.

2. We are under no treaty obligation to go to his assistance. The dissidents have however clearly received assistance from outside the Territories of the Sultan and a refusal on our part to meet the effects of Egyptian machinations and Saudi gun-running would undermine our whole position on the Trucial coast. It would be regarded by those States with which we have treaty obligations of defence as evidence that we were unable to carry out our responsibilities in the area.

3. We are determined to maintain stability in Persian Gulf.

4. Question facing us is what effective action we can take to restore situation and to prevent further deterioation.

5. We must act quickly and effectively to reassure the Sultan's supporters who are numerous. When the Sultan reasserted his authority in December 1955 sheikhs from all parts of the Sultanate offered their loyalty to him in Muscat and on their behalf as well as the Rulers we must make it clear that we do not propose to leave a free field to Egyptian intrigues and Saudi intervention. If we do this rapidly the whole scope of military operations can be restricted and unnecessary fighting and blood-shed avoided.

6. The most rapid and effective action open to us is air demonstration to hold position until Sultan's Forces are in a position to reassert themselves.

7. Operations are on a minute scale. Very few aeroplanes are involved and no British troops are yet committed. The whole incident would be nothing more than tribal intrigue and rivalries between tribal leaders and of nothing but local and temporary

CONFIDENTIAL

were it not for Egyptian and Saudi support. We hope to put an end to it quickly and without drawing too much attention publicly to the part played by Saudi Arabia. It remains our intention to improve our relations with King Saud as quickly as circumstances permit.

8. If asked you may say that we have kept the United States Government fully informed of the progress of events and of our policy.

CONFIDENTIAL

Text of Urgent Presse telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office Circular W. No. 634 dated 24th July, 1957.

O M A N.

My immediately preceding telegram.

Following points were made by Foreign Secretary in answer to supplementaries.

2. Mr. Bevan asked whether if Saudi Arabia was involved steps had been taken to approach the United States Government about supplies of arms. I said "We know that certain arms must have been smuggled into the country from outside because modern arms have been found in the possession of the dissidents. From where those arms come we do not know. We have certain suspicions. The most effective method of dealing with the situation is to see that the means of entry for further arms are closed off and that we propose to do. I am not yet in a position to say anything about allegations against a particular foreign country. As for discussions with the United States Government they have been kept in close touch with the situation".

3. Mr. Bevan asked further if it would not be desirable that the United States Government should influence the Saudi Arabian Government to make a statement deprecating violence. I replied "We are in touch with the United States Government about these matters. I do not think that any useful purpose is served by making allegations against particular governments at this moment. I agree that we have to seek to stop the movement of further arms into this area and to induce other governments/or individuals not to supply those arms".

4. Mr. A. Henderson asked whether it was not true that Saudi Arabia had been supplying arms and that this was in contravention of

/the

the United Nations Charter and whether it would not therefore be desirable to send United Nations Observers into the area. I replied "That is obviously an aspect of the matter which we have to discuss with our allies. It has been discussed with our allies but I certainly have no further statement to make upon it. We are continuing to do our best to see that the area is sealed off and that no further arms get in. I do not think that United Nations Observers will serve a useful purpose in this case".

5. In answer to a question by Mr. Grimond on our obligations under the Treaties I said inter alia "The action Her Majesty's Government have taken in this case is not novel. There are precedents for it. In 1930 when there was a Labour Government British naval vessels were authorised to bombard the Northern Muscat Coast where the Chief Shaikh of Khassab had defied the Sultan's authority. That action took place and the Shaikh submitted to the Sultan's authority. Similar action was taken under another Government in 1932."

6. Mr. Peart asked if it was not important to know what Aramco was doing since this Company had previously been supposed to give support against British interests and whether it was not vital therefore to consult with the United States Government. I replied "Those consultations are taking place".

1952.

Text of Commonwealth Relations Office Telegram Circular W.No.633 dated 23rd July, 1957.

My Telegram Circular W. No. 630

OMAN

Following is text of Foreign Secretary's statement in Commons to-day. Begins.

2. I undertook yesterday to inform the House of any further developments in the situation in Central Oman. I have received little further information about the situation on the ground but the military preparations to which I have referred have continued.

3. It will perhaps help the House to form a judgment on these matters if I remind the House about the nature of the area in which the disturbances have taken place. The Central Oman is a mountainous area the highest mountains rising to 9000 feet. It is surrounded by desert where the present temperatures are up to 120 degrees. There is no front line but rather a constantly shifting pattern of tribal allegiances and defections with minor armed skirmishes.

4. There is no question therefore of large-scale operations by British troops on the ground.

5. As I said yesterday discretion has been given to our local military authorities to take any necessary action on their own initiative within certain limits. So far as the Royal Air Force is concerned this includes leaflet dropping on behalf of the Sultan together with action against certain forts in the area held by dissident tribesmen. These forts manned by tribesmen equipped with modern arms smuggled in

/from

from outside the country are capable of intimidating both loyal and wavering tribes. I would emphasise that action has only been authorised against certain military targets.

6. The real issue is not the scale of the military operations but the fact that Her Majesty's Government intend to give full support to the Sultan.

Ends.

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM

W NO. 632 DATED 23RD JULY, 1957.

O M A N.

My telegram W No. 625. Following three paragraphs are the text of Foreign Secretary's reply to a question in Parliament yesterday.

2. Disturbances have recently been taking place in Central Oman a remote and difficult area in Arabia over which the Sultan of Muscat and Oman re-established his authority at the end of 1955. These disturbances have been stimulated by the former Iman of Oman whom the Sultan allowed to retire peaceably in 1955 to a village in the area. The former Iman and his brother Talib appear to have managed to acquire a limited quantity of arms and have been trying to persuade some of the local tribesmen to defect against the authority of the Sultan. While they have had some initial success the unrest still remains localised.

3. The Sultan of Muscat and Oman has requested British assistance and this request has been agreed to stop The local British authorities are considering with him the best form which this might take. They have been given discretion within certain limits to take military action. Small scale precautionary movements of our forces have already taken place. I will keep the House informed of further developments.

4. The reasons for this action are that the dissidents have clearly received assistance from outside the Territories of the Sultan. It is therefore in the view of Her Majesty's Government right that we should respond to the Sultan's request for help. We have friendly treaty relations with the Sultan and his predecessors for the past 150 years.

....5/

5. In answers to supplementary questions Foreign Secretary made the following points

(a) As far as we know no British troops were at present on Muscat soil;

(b) We have no reasons to expect any trouble arising from armed incursions by Saudi Arabia into Abu Dhabi;

(c) there is no question of there being/in adequate transport facilities to lift the British Forces required;

(d) in reply to a request for an assurance that there would be American support for British policy Secretary said: "I do not think that question arises. We have decided to take the action we have because of the long traditions of friendship between the Sultan and ourselves".

(e) We are not taking action under a treaty obligation. We have no obligation to deal with internal affairs in the Territory of Muscat. We have certain duties in respect of External Affairs but not in respect of Internal Affairs. We are giving the full support which we think a staunch friend requires Foreign Secretary replied: "certainly not" when asked if he would give an assurance that British troops aircraft and ships would not be engaged until the House had been told in advance;

(g) we have no knowledge that the arms concerned in Oman are of American origin. All that we know is that there are modern arms in the area which must have come from outside the Territories of Muscat.

SECRET

SECRET.

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM

CIRCULAR W. NO. 630 DATED 23RD JULY, 1957.

My telegram Circular W. No. 625.

OMAN.

In addition to measures outlined in paragraph 2 of my telegram under reference we have agreed that at a later stage bombing may be used if necessary to demolish the selected forts. Warning is to be given before each attack and time is to be allowed after each series of attacks to test their efficiency. Air action will be accompanied by maximum possible political effort by Sultan to rally the allegiance of his subjects and to invite submission by the rebels.

2. Above may be communicated to Commonwealth authorities at your discretion emphasising secrecy. We hope shortly to send you summary of Foreign Secretary's statement in Parliament today.

SECRET

Mr Kevan DEA

SECRET

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE

TELEGRAM NO. W 625 DATED 22ND JULY 1957.

My telegram Z No. 43.

OMAN.

It has become clear that the most effective support which we can give to the Sultan at this stage is by air action. The aims of an air operation would be

(a) to reduce the morale of the rebels and increase that of the friendly tribes to a point where cooperation with the Sultan's Forces would permit reoccupation of key points without undue difficulty;

(b) to demonstrate the power of the weapons at the Sultan's disposal and to convince them that further resistance would be fruitless and would lead only to hardship;

(c) without inflicting casualties to show the population the consequences of supporting the rebels.

2. Authority has therefore been given to the United Kingdom Military Commander in the area to authorise certain air action. This will take the form of strikes with cannon and rockets against a few forts in Oman after due warning has been given. Demonstration flights and leaflet dropping will also take place.

3. Apart from military plans the Sultan is using his influence to win back the loyalty of the dissident tribesmen. We hope that these operations will succeed in sealing off the dissident area. Rulers in the trucial states have urged

SECRET

the harm to our position if we refuse to intervene. A failure by the Sultan to re-establish his authority soon would have grave results in the other States of which Egyptian propaganda could be expected to make the most.

CONFIDENTIAL

195/2.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

MC:AS

I.10203

Dated: 22nd July, 1957.
2048.

FROM:

Rec'd: 23rd July, 1957.
0830.

Australian High Commission,
LONDON.

1742. CONFIDENTIAL.

Addressed Canberra 1742 repeated Savingram Washington.

Oman.

My 1711.

Selwyn Lloyd announced in the House of Commons to-day that the United Kingdom would accede to the request for assistance from the Sultan of Muscat. Precautionary movements of United Kingdom forces had already taken place. Lloyd gave as reasons the fact that the rebels were clearly receiving outside aid (but did not name the source) and the friendly treaty relations which have existed between the United Kingdom, Muscat and Oman for 150 years.

2. The Foreign Office have told us that the assistance envisaged was a display of force with strafing and rockets by the R.A.F. No use of United Kingdom ground forces was contemplated. The reasons for the decision to provide assistance were similar to those behind the United Kingdom stand on Buraimi. Moreover if the rebels were not dislodged from the areas of central Oman, which they held, then the spread of dissident movement in Muscat and Oman, and to Trucial sheikhdoms could be expected. However, even if the rebels remain in control of the areas they now hold, it would still be possible, although more difficult to maintain control of Buraimi.

3. The Foreign Office state that Saudi Arabian and Egyptian support of the rebel movement in Oman is of long standing. The rebel forces had been trained at a special school in Saudi Arabia and arms supplied. The Egyptians provided propaganda support over Cairo Radio and an independent Omani representation had been established at Cairo. With Aqaba, Oman was one of the issues on which Nasser and Saud saw eye to eye.

4. Existing treaty relations do not bind the United Kingdom to provide assistance, but assistance has been provided in the past in similar circumstances and the Sultan has grown to expect it. Moreover, the United Kingdom has a certain obligation to the Sultan in that two R.A.F. air bases are established in his territory.

5. The Foreign Office commented on the Sultan's attitude of independence towards, and isolation from, other Arab and Muslim states which make it difficult to rally support for his position even from such states as Iraq. Relation with Pakistan complicated by dispute over Gwadar. Foreign Office incline to view that if the present went to the United Nations the Sultan might well refuse to participate on the grounds that this was his own internal problem, on which he would prefer to act in his own way.

6. The Foreign Office say they have not yet had

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

any indication of United States attitude.

MIN&DEPT E.A.
MIN&DEPT DEFENCE
P.M'S

23rd July, 1957.

SEC A/Ss L&T(DIV.5) UN CR PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA
E.AF&ME E AF&ME@ INF DL MT C&P
G

THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DIGITISED IN SECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Times File No. 195/2.

Published at London Date July 22 1957

ME

BRITAIN AGREES TO SULTAN'S REQUEST FOR AID

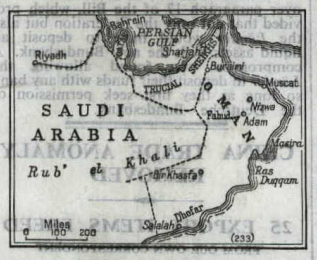
PRECAUTIONARY MOVEMENTS OF TROOPS AND AIRCRAFT

From Our Diplomatic Correspondent

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman has asked for British assistance in face of the tribal rising in central Oman. The British Government have agreed to meet his request, and the local British authorities in the Persian Gulf are considering, with the Sultan, the best form which British assistance might take.

Meanwhile, certain troop movements have already taken place. These are understood to be on a small scale and merely precautionary. No forces have been sent to Muscat and Oman. The question of R.A.F. assistance is also under discussion, and there have been some precautionary movements of aircraft.

The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman is not a protected State, but Britain has protected the Sultan's interests at his request in the parallel Buraimi dispute,



and has been in treaty relations with the Sultanate since 1839.

British subjects have frequently acted in an advisory capacity to the Sultan and British subjects officer the local forces. The British protected States in the Persian Gulf, therefore, regard Britain as under as strong an obligation to Muscat and Oman as to themselves, and, if Britain failed to give support, confidence in the British intention to give adequate support in future to British-protected States such as Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, or Sharjah, against the encroachments of their rich and more powerful neighbour Saudi Arabia would be severely shaken.

ARMS SECURED

Only the scantiest information is available in London about the situation in central Oman. The unrest centred round Nizwa was stimulated by the ex-Imam of Oman and his brother Talib, who have managed to secure a limited quantity of arms. The two brothers have been trying to persuade some of the local tribes to revolt against the Sultan's authority. They have had some initial success, but the unrest is said to remain localized, as indeed it must for lack of communications, if nothing else.

It appears, however, that a fairly large area has passed out of the Sultan's control. Before the rising the Sultan had two forces—the Batinah force at Sohar on the coast, which had some stiff fighting against Talib in 1955 before he escaped to Saudi Arabia, and the Oman Regiment which was stationed in central Oman, but has now apparently had to withdraw. Both forces have British officers employed by the Sultan.

There are few facilities for aircraft in the Sultanate of Muscat. Airstrips exist on Masira island and to the south at Salalah. Any initial action or leaflet-dropping would be done from the R.A.F. station in the adjacent sheikhdom at Sharjah.

Britain also keeps a force of Trucial Oman levies in the Trucial sheikhdoms for their protection. Part of this force is believed to be occupying the disputed oasis at Buraimi which was retaken from a Saudi Arabian irregular force in October, 1955.

A number of picturesque, determined, but none too dependable tribal leaders are evidently concerned in the present trouble. The ex-Imam, Ghalib bin Ali, was in contact with the Saudis before 1955 when they were seeking to extend their influence by bribery, arms smuggling, and the infiltration of agents from Buraimi which was then in their hands.

When the Sultan reoccupied central Oman in December, 1955, Ghalib fled from Nizwa to his village of Sait, where he was later allowed by the Sultan to remain under the guarantee of the chief sheikh of his tribe. He did not, apparently, as some reports have said, escape to Saudi Arabia, but his bother Talib did.

ANOTHER SHEIKH

Talib was until recently living in Dammam in Saudi Arabia on the Persian Gulf, near Qatar, where he was used by the Saudi Arabian Government to interview Omanis arriving in Saudi Arabia. British officers of the Batinah Force have said that he put up a brave resistance when central Oman was reoccupied in 1955. He has now evidently been smuggled back with arms to his former supporters.

The extent of the rising probably much depends upon the attitude of another sheikh—Suleiman bin Hamyar al Nabhani, who has in the past sought from both Saudi Arabia and Britain recognition of his independence. Before the Sultan's expedition in 1955 he proclaimed himself ruler of Jebel Akhdar, a mountainous area between Nizwa and the coast, where the few rocky tracks would offer heavy going for any military vehicle. However, in December, 1955, Suleiman bin Hamyer declared his support for the Sultan when the latter entered Nizwa.

He has, however, been described as "a powerful, if not very congenial personality," who at one time acquired for himself the title of King of Nebhkaniya. He was strongly rumoured in 1955 to be in correspondence with the Saudis, and he arrived at Nizwa to make his submission in a well-kept modern American convertible, presumably supplied through friends in Saudi Arabia.

CAIRO, July 21.—A representative of the Imam of Oman claimed to-night that rebel forces had captured the town of Nizwa, an important communications centre.—*Associated Press.*

Sir Bernard Burrows, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, has been recalled from leave in Hampshire.

ame of Paper ... File No. 1972/2
Published at London Date July 22 1957

ME

BRITAIN AGREES TO SULTAN'S REQUEST FOR AID

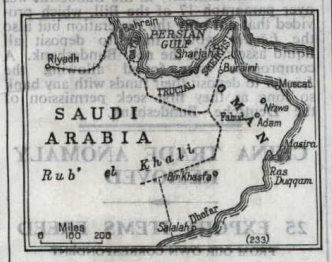
PRECAUTIONARY MOVEMENTS OF TROOPS AND AIRCRAFT

From Our Diplomatic Correspondent

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman has asked for British assistance in face of the tribal rising in central Oman. The British Government have agreed to meet his request, and the local British authorities in the Persian Gulf are considering, with the Sultan, the best form which British assistance might take.

Meanwhile, certain troop movements have already taken place. These are understood to be on a small scale and merely precautionary. No forces have been sent to Muscat and Oman. The question of R.A.F. assistance is also under discussion, and there have been some precautionary movements of aircraft.

The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman is not a protected State, but Britain has protected the Sultan's interests at his request in the parallel Buraimi dispute,



and has been in treaty relations with the Sultanate since 1839.

British subjects have frequently acted in an advisory capacity to the Sultan and British subjects officer the local forces. The British protected States in the Persian Gulf, therefore, regard Britain as under as strong an obligation to Muscat and Oman as to themselves, and, if Britain failed to give support, confidence in the British intention to give adequate support in future to British-protected States such as Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, or Sharjah, against the encroachments of their rich and more powerful neighbour Saudi Arabia would be severely shaken.

ARMS SECURED

Only the scantiest information is available in London about the situation in central Oman. The unrest centred round Nizwa was stimulated by the ex-Imam of Oman and his brother Talib, who have managed to secure a limited quantity of arms. The two brothers have been trying to persuade some of the local tribes to revolt against the Sultan's authority. They have had some initial success, but the unrest is said to remain localized, as indeed it must for lack of communications, if nothing else.

It appears, however, that a fairly large area has passed out of the Sultan's control. Before the rising the Sultan had two forces—the Batinah force at Sohar on the coast, which had some stiff fighting against Talib in 1955 before he escaped to Saudi Arabia, and the Oman Regiment which was stationed in central Oman, but has now apparently had to withdraw. Both forces have British officers employed by the Sultan.

SEARCH FOR OIL

The Oman Regiment appears to be the successor of the Muscat and Oman Field Force, which was concentrated at the Iraq Petroleum Company's drilling station at Fahud before December, 1955, when the Sultan in a bloodless expedition reasserted his authority at Nizwa.

Representatives of the I.P.C. were unable to say yesterday whether any of their staff remained in the area of Fahud. They may have been withdrawn by the company's chief representative at Muscat, but Fahud is some 100 miles from the centre of the disturbance. The company discount stories of a rich oil find in the area. They have drilled a well at Fahud without finding oil, but further prospecting is evidently considered worthwhile.

There are few facilities for aircraft in the Sultanate of Muscat. Airstrips exist on Masira island and to the south at Salalah. Any initial action or leaflet-dropping would be done from the R.A.F. station in the adjacent sheikhdom at Sharjah.

Britain also keeps a force of Trucial Oman levies in the Trucial sheikhdoms for their protection. Part of this force is believed to be occupying the disputed oasis at Buraimi which was retaken from a Saudi Arabian irregular force in October, 1955.

A number of picturesque, determined, but none too dependable tribal leaders are evidently concerned in the present trouble. The ex-Imam, Ghalib bin Ali, was in contact with the Saudis before 1955 when they were seeking to extend their influence by bribery, arms smuggling, and the infiltration of agents from Buraimi which was then in their hands.

When the Sultan reoccupied central Oman in December, 1955, Ghalib fled from Nizwa to his village of Sait, where he was later allowed by the Sultan to remain under the guarantee of the chief sheikh of his tribe. He did not, apparently, as some reports have said, escape to Saudi Arabia, but his bother Talib did.

ANOTHER SHEIKH

Talib was until recently living in Dammam in Saudi Arabia on the Persian Gulf, near Qatar, where he was used by the Saudi Arabian Government to interview Omanis arriving in Saudi Arabia. British officers of the Batinah Force have said that he put up a brave resistance when central Oman was reoccupied in 1955. He has now evidently been smuggled back with arms to his former supporters.

The extent of the rising probably much depends upon the attitude of another sheikh—Suleiman bin Hamyar al Nabhani, who has in the past sought from both Saudi Arabia and Britain recognition of his independence. Before the Sultan's expedition in 1955 he proclaimed himself ruler of Jebel Akhdar, a mountainous area between Nizwa and the coast, where the few rocky tracks would offer heavy going for any military vehicle. However, in December, 1955, Suleiman bin Hamyer declared his support for the Sultan when the latter entered Nizwa.

He has, however, been described as "a powerful, if not very congenial personality," who at one time acquired for himself the title of King of Nebhkaniya. He was strongly rumoured in 1955 to be in correspondence with the Saudis, and he arrived at Nizwa to make his submission in a well-kept modern American convertible, presumably supplied through friends in Saudi Arabia.

CAIRO, July 21.—A representative of the Imam of Oman claimed to-night that rebel forces had captured the town of Nizwa, an important communications centre.—*Associated Press.*

Sir Bernard Burrows, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, has been recalled from leave in Hampshire.

STANDING BY IN KENYA

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

NAIROBI, JULY 21

A hundred officers and men of 1st Battalion, The Cameronians, are standing by at Gilgil camp, 80 miles from here, in readiness for an early move to the Persian Gulf, where the parent battalion has been moved from Bahrain to Sharjah.

An Army spokesman said that a move would depend on the availability of R.A.F. transport from here. He added that the return of these troops, who had been training here for three months, was regarded as a normal precaution in view of developments in the area where the battalion was stationed.

xtract from "PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES" Vol. 574. No. 146.
22nd July,1957.(32-40)

CENTRAL OMAN (DISTURBANCES)

Mr. Grimond (*by Private Notice*) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs wheher he has any statement to make on the situation in Muscat and Oman; what action is being taken by Her Majesty's Government in regard thereto and the reasons for such action.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Selwyn Lloyd): Disturbances have recently been taking place in Central Oman, a remote and difficult area in Arabia, over which the Sultan of Muscat and Oman re-established his authority at the end of 1955. These disturbances have been stimulated by the former Imam of Oman, whom the Sultan allowed to retire peaceably in 1955 to a village in the area. The former Imam and his brother, Talib, appear to have managed to acquire a limited quantity of arms and have been trying to persuade some of the local tribesmen to defect against the authority of the Sultan. While they have had some initial success, the unrest still remains localised.

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman has requested British assistance and this request has been agreed to. The local British authorities are considering with him the best form which this might take. They have been given discretion within certain limits to take military action. Small-scale precautionary movements of our forces have already taken place. I will keep the House informed of further developments.

The reasons for this action are that the dissidents have clearly received assistance from outside the Territories of the Sultan. It is, therefore, in the view of Her Majesty's Government, right that we should respond to the Sultan's request for help. We have had friendly Treaty relations with the Sultan and his predecessors for the past 150 years.

Mr. Grimond: May I ask whether British troops are already in the area and, also, whether there are British citizens engaged in prospecting and other activities in the area who may be in danger?

Mr. Lloyd: There are certain British citizens prospecting for oil at a place called Fahud, which is some considerable distance from the area of disaffection.

carriers anywhere in Middle East Command to shift them? Does he not think that this is uncomfortably like what we heard nearly a year ago? Is he having an inquiry into this?

Mr. Lloyd: I can reassure the right hon. Gentleman that there is no question at all of there not being adequate transport facilities available to lift the forces required.

Mr. P. Williams: In view of the great danger of the situation, can my right hon. and learned Friend give an assurance that there will be American support for British foreign policy?

Mr. Lloyd: I do not think that that question arises. We have decided to take the action we have because of the long traditions of friendship between the Sultan and ourselves.

Mr. P. Noel-Baker: May I press the point which I made to the right hon. and learned Gentleman? Have we decided to take action simply in response to a request, or in virtue of a Treaty obligation?

Mr. Lloyd: May I make it clear that we are not doing this under a Treaty obligation? We have no Treaty obligation to deal with internal affairs in the territory of Muscat. We have certain duties in respect of external affairs, but not in respect of internal affairs. We are giving the full support which we think a staunch friend requires.

Mr. Benn: While thanking the right hon. and learned Gentleman for making absolutely clear that none of the Treaties between ourselves and the Sultan provides for British intervention in the internal affairs of Muscat and Oman, may I ask him whether he will give an assurance to the House that British troops, aircraft and ships will not be engaged until the House has been told of it in advance?

Mr. Lloyd: Certainly not.

Mr. Nabarro: In view of the supreme importance of British oil supplies from the Persian Gulf and the fact that allegations have been made in the last few days that the supplies of arms reaching the Imam are modern arms, of American origin, can my right hon. and learned Friend say what representations are being made to the United States in this matter?

because of a muddle over transport planes; that three Bevereley planes could shift the troops required; but that there are simply not enough serviceable troop

xtract from "PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES" Vol. 574. No. 146.
22nd July,1957.(32-40)

Mr. W. R. Williams: Does the Minister recall that he told me that the number of nurses available in the Manchester area was 812 below establishment? Is not that a very serious situation, and will he do all he can to make the position better next year?

Mr. Vaughan-Morgan: The recruitment of nurses above the number already employed is a development which must be looked at by the board in the light of all the other developments which are involved.

Royal Free Hospital (Glandular Fever)

49. **Mrs. L. Jeger** asked the Minister of Health how many student nurses at the Royal Free Hospital who contracted glandular fever in the course of their duties come from overseas; and what arrangements have been made for their payment during convalescence.

Mr. Vaughan-Morgan: Nineteen, all of whom have received full pay during their convalescence.

Mrs. Jeger: Will the Minister make it absolutely clear to the House whether the full pay to which he refers came from the hospital governors? Is he not aware that his right hon. Friend the Minister of Pensions and National Insurance refused sickness benefit to several of these girls on the grounds that when they went home for convalescence, as it was described, home was abroad, and they were refused sickness benefit?

Mr. Vaughan-Morgan: My advice is that one nurse who went home to Malta did not qualify for sickness benefit from the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance, but she was paid her full salary by the board of governors and her fare was paid by the board out of non-Exchequer funds.

Dr. Summerskill: Is there not a question of principle involved here, and might not further inquiry reveal anomalies in the Act? Could the Minister say whether, in the event of the hospital telling these girls—there are so many girls from abroad in this country—to go home, they would therefore qualify for benefit?

Mr. Vaughan-Morgan: I should like to look at that question, which involves the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance.

At the moment, as far as I know, there are no British troops on Muscat soil.

Viscount Hinchingbrooke: My right hon. and learned Friend will recall that in September, 1955, before the International Arbitration Tribunal at Geneva, incontrovertible evidence was given of attempted bribery by King Saud of Sheikh Zaid, accompanied by threats of force. Can my right hon. and learned Friend assure the House that due precautions are being taken by Her Majesty's Government against any armed incursions on the part of Saudi Arabia?

Mr. Lloyd: Sheikh Zaid is Sheikh of Abu Dhabi. As far as that area is concerned, we have no reason to expect any trouble of any sort. The other aspects of the matter are certainly being kept carefully under review.

Mr. P. Noel-Baker: The Foreign Secretary has made it plain that this is potentially a very grave matter. I wonder whether he could tell the House more precisely what are our Treaty obligations in the matter. Would he consider giving us a White Paper, setting out the basic documents and a consecutive account of how the present situation has come about?

Mr. Lloyd: I will certainly consider that matter, but I think perhaps it might assist the right hon. Gentleman if I said straight away that up to 1793 the Sultan of Muscat was also Imam of Oman. Then a separate Imam was elected, who ruled under the Sultan. In 1913 the then Imam revolted and from 1913 to 1920 there was a period of uncertainty. But in 1921 an agreement was reached whereby the Imam was given a certain autonomy within the realm of Muscat. The situation deteriorated towards 1955 for reasons about which some hints have been given today, and in 1955 the Sultan re-established his authority in the area.

Mr. G. Brown: The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that we shall respond to the Sultan's request for help. Is he aware that it has been stated in eye-witness accounts that the request cannot be answered at the moment because of a muddle over transport planes; that three Bevereley planes could shift the troops required; but that there are simply not enough serviceable troop carriers anywhere in Middle East Command to shift them? Does he not think that this is uncomfortably like what we heard nearly a year ago? Is he having an inquiry into this?

Mr. Lloyd: I can reassure the right hon. Gentleman that there is no question at all of there not being adequate transport facilities available to lift the forces required.

Mr. P. Williams: In view of the great danger of the situation, can my right hon. and learned Friend give an assurance that there will be American support for British foreign policy?

Mr. Lloyd: I do not think that that question arises. We have decided to take the action we have because of the long traditions of friendship between the Sultan and ourselves.

Mr. P. Noel-Baker: May I press the point which I made to the right hon. and learned Gentleman? Have we decided to take action simply in response to a request, or in virtue of a Treaty obligation?

Mr. Lloyd: May I make it clear that we are not doing this under a Treaty obligation? We have no Treaty obligation to deal with internal affairs in the territory of Muscat. We have certain duties in respect of external affairs, but not in respect of internal affairs. We are giving the full support which we think a staunch friend requires.

Mr. Benn: While thanking the right hon. and learned Gentleman for making absolutely clear that none of the Treaties between ourselves and the Sultan provides for British intervention in the internal affairs of Muscat and Oman, may I ask him whether he will give an assurance to the House that British troops, aircraft and ships will not be engaged until the House has been told of it in advance?

Mr. Lloyd: Certainly not.

Mr. Nabarro: In view of the supreme importance of British oil supplies from the Persian Gulf and the fact that allegations have been made in the last few days that the supplies of arms reaching the Imam are modern arms, of American origin, can my right hon. and learned Friend say what representations are being made to the United States in this matter?

xtract from "PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES" Vol. 574. No. 146.
22nd July,1957.(32-40)

Mr. Lloyd : I have no knowledge at all that the arms concerned are of American origin. All that we know is that there are modern arms in the area which must have come from outside the territories of Muscat.

Mr. Wigg : The right hon. and learned Gentleman was good enough to inform my right hon. Friend the Member for Belper (Mr. G. Brown) that aircraft were available at the present time. Would he be kind enough to give the House a categorical assurance that the movement of troops from Kenya has not been limited because aircraft have not been available? I am asking this question in the past tense, not the future.

Mr. Lloyd : As far as I know there has been no limitation upon the movement of the troops required from Kenya by reason of the lack of any transport facilities.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker : Order.

Mr. Benn : On a point of order. I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 9 to draw attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the decision of Her Majesty's Government to offer British military assistance to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. Member for Bristol, South-East (Mr. Benn) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 9 to draw attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the decision of Her Majesty's Government to offer British military assistance to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman. I think that this submission must fail on the ground of urgency. We have just heard that, at the moment, there are no British troops in Muscat—I understand that to be the position—and we are not in possession of any of the facts of the situation which would entitle me to regard this as an urgent matter.

Mr. Benn : Mr. Speaker, may I submit very briefly the grounds on which I ask leave to move this Motion? First, it is a definite request by the Sultan to Her Majesty's Government, so that of the grounds of definiteness there may be no question. Its urgency arises, surely, on two grounds. There is, first, the Foreign Secretary's refusal to give an assurance that British troops will not be committed before the House is informed; and secondly, that Middle East Land Forces, and also Army spokesmen in Kenya and in this country have made it perfectly clear that military action is contemplated. Only a year ago precautionary measures of this kind did lead, within a week, to armed conflict.

May I, further, put this? It is a well-established principle of international law that intervention by a foreign State in a country where there are civil disturbances is contrary to international law, and that it was on those grounds that the Foreign Secretary condemned Russian intervention in Hungary.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. Member has raised a large number of questions, I would remind him, which might very properly be the subject of an extensive debate, but, under the Standing Order, it has to be one definite matter, which the hon. Member has specified—the decision of Her Majesty's Government to offer British military assistance to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman. What I heard the right hon. and learned Gentleman say was that the British Government had decided to respond to the request of this sovereign for help. If the hon. Gentleman says that it is against any treaty that we should do so, that is a legal matter that he should argue at the proper time.

Mr. Wigg : With respect, Mr. Speaker, you must have misheard the Foreign Secretary, because he specifically said that the intervention was in pursuance of a treaty obligation.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. Member must excuse me. I heard the right hon. Gentleman say that it was not.

Mr. Paget : On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Surely the point of urgency is this. The Foreign Secretary has said that he has issued instructions that British troops may be employed, and committed to battle on foreign soil, not pursuant to any treaty obligations but because it is the way one likes to help a good and firm friend. Now, Mr. Speaker, surely it is impossible to say that an announcement by the Government of an intention to commit British troops to battle on foreign soil is not urgent, that it does not matter.

Mr. Speaker : It was not so specific as that. What the right hon. and learned Gentleman said—and I have just seen his statement—is this:

"The local British authorities are considering with him the best form which this might take—"

that is, the aid:

"They have been given discretion within certain limits to take military action."

Hon. Members : Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker : Order. In my view, unless we know something more about this case—[*Interruption.*] Order—and the limits which have been placed on that discretion, I do not think that I can call it under the Standing Order.

May I also remind the House that there are this week four, I think, Supply Days, that next week there is the Appropriation Bill, and that on any of these days this matter can be discussed in all its aspects. That is, in itself, sufficient ground, as has been ruled by all my predecessors, for my refusing to receive a Motion of this sort. It is my view, on what information is before us—which is extremely sketchy—that I would not, in those circumstances, be justified in accepting the Motion.

Mr. Hale *rose*——

Mr. Speaker : Order. I have ruled on the point of order to the best of my ability. If there is a new submission, I will gladly hear it.

Mr. Hale : I wish respectfully to raise a completely new point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I draw your attention to the fact that you, of your own act, terminated the discussion of this matter when a large number of hon. Members were on their feet desiring to put further questions and to ascertain the facts? Is it not, therefore, unfortunate that there was an immediate Ruling from the Chair that we cannot take Parliamentary action because we have not ascertained the facts, when we were actually prevented from understanding the facts from the right hon. and learned Gentleman by your action in ruling that the matter had already been sufficiently discussed?

Mr. Speaker : The hon. Gentleman is really obliquely criticising my action in the Chair. If he wishes to criticise my action, he knows that there is one way of doing so.

When there are a large number of supplementary questions, particularly after the time for Questions, they tend to drag on to a disorderly debate, and in my view, if this matter is considered important by right hon. and hon. Gentlemen it should be debated when all the facts can be gone into properly. I do not, at present, think that it is definite enough or urgent enough to justify my accepting this Motion.

Mr. Gaitskell : I must say that I had rather hoped that we should have had an opportunity of putting one or two further questions to the Foreign Secretary, in the light of the point that you, Mr. Speaker, yourself made, that everything was not yet completely clear. I do not wish in any way to criticise you, but I would like to establish that your decision today does not in any way prevent us from proceeding to move the Adjournment of the House tomorrow if, as a result of a further statement, which I hope we shall have from the Foreign Secretary, and further questioning, this seems to us to be an appropriate course to follow.

Mr. Speaker : Of course, what the right hon. Gentleman says is perfectly true. I have come to the decision which I have given on this issue on the information that I have before me but, naturally, if we get further information, that might alter the whole thing.

Mr. Benn : May I point out, Sir, that the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman is a sovereign State? It is not a British Protectorate in any sense. What the Foreign Secretary has said today is something that has not been said since last November, which is that British commanders have been authorised to take military action in the territory of a foreign Power. Admittedly, there are certain limitations, but those instructions have already been issued to military commanders, though the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman is an independent foreign State. In those circumstances, is it not clear that a matter of the very gravest urgency has arisen, on which the House may not have time, if it waits even until tomorrow to debate properly?

Mr. Speaker : I do not think so, really.

Mr. H. Fraser : Is it not a fact that urgency has been added to this matter, as far as our friends in the Persian Gulf are concerned, by the manifest near-treachery of certain hon. Members opposite?

xtract from "PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES" Vol. 574. No. 146.
22nd July,1957.(32-40)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. P. Noel-Baker: May we ask the Foreign Secretary for an assurance that he will give us another statement tomorrow?

Mr. Lloyd: I will certainly consider that matter, and if I have further information I will consider giving it to the House.

Mr. C. Pannell: Are you prepared, Mr. Speaker, to condone the remark of the hon. Member for Stafford and Stone (Mr. H. Fraser)? Is it not an un-parliamentary observation?

Mr. Speaker: As I heard him, what the hon. Member said was "near-treachery". I do not know what he means by that, but it is a very undesirable expression to use in this House. I deprecate the use of such language very much, but I cannot say that it falls within the limits of un-parliamentary language.

Mr. Paget: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Has not urgency been added by the Foreign Secretary's latest intervention? He has said first, that he will not give us an assurance that British troops will not be committed without his coming to the House, and he now says that he will not give us an assurance that he will make a statement even tomorrow. I would respectfully say that the urgency here is that if it is left to one of the opportunities later in the week—even if it is left until tomorrow—the very thing which is the basis of those British troops being committed to battle on foreign soil may have happened.

Mr. Speaker: I would remind the hon. and learned Member for Northampton (Mr. Paget) that what the right hon. and learned Gentleman said was:

> "Small-scale precautionary movements of our forces have already taken place. I will keep the House informed of further developments."

The right hon. and learned Gentleman has said that he will, if he has anything further to say. I think that the House should rest content and wait for something which may make such a Motion as this definite and urgent. At present, it is not so, to my mind.

Mr. Fernyhough: While it may be true that this week there will be further opportunities for discussing this matter, many of us on this side of the House are very much afraid that British troops, especially National Service men, will have been committed to battle before we get that further opportunity, and some of us are very much opposed to that. That is why we think it is urgent, so that we might restrain the Government from committing a second Suez.

Mr. Speaker: That is all very hypothetical for me at the moment.

Mr. Gaitskell: May I ask the Foreign Secretary this question, Mr. Speaker? We are anxious to be kept in the closest touch with the situation. At the moment no British forces are engaged. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman would give a definite undertaking to come to the House tomorrow and tell us what further developments, if any, have taken place and whether any British troops have been committed by then, I think that would, at any rate, give us the opportunity of raising the matter if we would feel it necessary to do so tomorrow. Will the Foreign Secretary give that assurance?

Mr. Lloyd: Certainly, Sir.

Mr. Wigg: If between now and tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, it is decided that questions from this side of the House are not near-treachery but treachery, would you be good enough to persuade the Prime Minister to have a General Election and let the country decide?

Mr. Speaker: I have no influence over the Prime Minister in these matters, except to call on him now to move the Motion which stands in his name.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered, That this day Business other than the Business of Supply may be taken before Ten o'clock.—[*The Prime Minister.*]

Proceedings on the Consideration of the Lords Amendments to the Naval Discipline Bill exempted, at this day's Sitting, from the provisions of Standing Order No. 1 (Sittings of the House).—[*The Prime Minister.*]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. P. Noel-Baker: May we ask the Foreign Secretary for an assurance that he will give us another statement tomorrow?

Mr. Lloyd: I will certainly consider that matter, and if I have further information I will consider giving it to the House.

Mr. C. Pannell: Are you prepared, Mr. Speaker, to condone the remark of the hon. Member for Stafford and Stone (Mr. H. Fraser)? Is it not an un-parliamentary observation?

Mr. Speaker: As I heard him, what the hon. Member said was "near-treachery". I do not know what he means by that, but it is a very undesirable expression to use in this House. I deprecate the use of such language very much, but I cannot say that it falls within the limits of un-parliamentary language.

Mr. Paget: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Has not urgency been added by the Foreign Secretary's latest intervention? He has said first, that he will not give us an assurance that British troops will not be committed without his coming to the House, and he now says that he will not give us an assurance that he will make a statement even tomorrow. I would respectfully say that the urgency here is that if it is left to one of the opportunities later in the week—even if it is left until tomorrow—the very thing which is the basis of those British troops being committed to battle on foreign soil may have happened.

Mr. Speaker: I would remind the hon. and learned Member for Northampton (Mr. Paget) that what the right hon. and learned Gentleman said was:

> "Small-scale preliminary movements of our forces have already taken place. I will keep the House informed of further developments."

The right hon. and learned Gentleman has said that he will, if he has anything further to say. I think that the House should rest content and wait for something which may make such a Motion as this definite and urgent. At present, it is not so, to my mind.

Mr. Fernyhough: While it may be true that this week there will be further opportunities for discussing this matter, many of us on this side of the House are very much afraid that British troops, especially National Service men, will have been committed to battle before we get that further opportunity, and some of us are very much opposed to that. That is why we think it necessary so that we might restrain the Government from committing a second Suez.

Mr. Speaker: That is all very hypothetical for me at the moment.

Mr. Gaitskell: May I ask the Foreign Secretary this question, Mr. Speaker? We are anxious to be kept in the closest touch with the situation. At the moment no British forces are engaged. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman would give a definite undertaking to come to the House tomorrow and tell us what further developments, if any, have taken place and whether any British troops have been committed by then, I think that would, at any rate, give us the opportunity of raising the matter if we would feel it necessary to do so tomorrow. Will the Foreign Secretary give that assurance?

Mr. Lloyd: Certainly, Sir.

Mr. Wigg: If between now and tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, it is decided that questions from this side of the House are not near-treachery nor treachery, would you be good enough to persuade the Prime Minister to have a General Election and let the country decide?

Mr. Speaker: I have no influence over the Prime Minister in these matters, except to call on him now to move the Motion which stands in his name.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered, That this day Business other than the Business of Supply may be taken before Ten o'clock.—[*The Prime Minister.*]

Proceedings on the Consideration of the Lords Amendments to the Naval Discipline Bill exempted, at this day's Sitting, from the provisions of Standing Order No. 1 (Sittings of the House).—[*The Prime Minister.*]

SECRET

Mr. White
~~1951~~ Sarah.

195/2

22nd July, 1957

THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN OMAN

THE MINISTER
THE SECRETARY
ASST.SEC. DIV.IV

The closeness of U.S.A. relations with the Commonwealth is bound to bring in its train disadvantages as well as advantages. The present trouble in Oman is a case in point. It is not my duty to traverse the past and present relations of Oman with the British, nor the very favourable attitude which has recently been officially displayed by the U.S.A. Government towards Saudi Arabia.

2. However, oil magnates, whether they be British or American, are a tough lot and have a strong eye on their own pecuniary interests while outwardly professing patriotic sentiments or a desire for international peace.

3. British prestige suffered in the end by the Anglo/Iranian Company's conduct in the handling of its affairs in Persia, and it is to be hoped that the Commonwealth's strategic routes will not be jeopardised by an over-lenient attitude on the part of the United States Government to the actions of American oil interests in the Middle East generally or such personages as King Saud, a less reliable monarch than his father.

4. I submit that from the point of view of the Commonwealth's interests, it should be borne in mind that Oman lies on one of our main strategic routes and that any internal dissension in the Sultanate will only lead to further trouble in the Middle East at a time when moderating influences should be encouraged.

5. The current position in Oman therefore appears to call for the closest co-operation between the United Kingdom and U.S.A. Governments while ensuring that the integrity of Oman is preserved., under the treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation between the United Kingdom and the Sultanate of Oman and Muscat of 20th December, 1951.

(J.E. Oldham)
Adviser on Commonwealth
Relations.

SECRET

MR. WHITE
MR. ROBERTSON

K.C.G. KEVIN ESQ.,
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

With the Compliments

of the

Official Secretary

Encl;
Text of C.R.O. Telegram No.

Circular Z 43, dated 20th July. 1957

Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Canberra, A. C. T.

Mr Bennett : for
The Sec : D
Mr Rawlinson

23/7/57

SECRET

Mr Kerr DEA

195/2.

SECRET.

TEXT OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE TELEGRAM CIRCULAR Z NUMBER 43 DATED 20TH JULY, 1957.

My telegram No. 1555 to Karachi.

OMAN.

1. You may now inform Commonwealth authorities that this revolt against authority of the Sultan has broken out in Central Oman, and that Sultan has appealed to United Kingdom Government for help which will be given as necessary though the precise forms it will take have not yet been decided.

2. (To Ottawa, Canberra, Wellington, Pretoria, Karachi and Salisbury only). You may add that we have ample evidence that revolt has been inspired and fomented by Egyptians and Saudis and sustained by arms smuggled in from outside but that in any publicity which becomes necessary we shall do our utmost to avoid making accusations against the Saudis because we are anxious to improve our relations with King Saud. This may be difficult as the Press will no doubt get hold of the facts.

3. (To all). You should not give the impression that this incident provides ground for international concern. It should be represented as a minor outbreak of local trouble with which we are dealing on routine precautionary lines.

SECRET

THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DIGITISED IN SECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Times File No. 195/2

Published at London Date July 20 1957

THE TIM

TRIBAL REVOLT IN OMAN

"SOME INITIAL SUCCESS"

FLUID SITUATION

From Our Diplomatic Correspondent

A rising of tribesmen in central Oman has deprived the Sultan of Muscat and Oman of authority over part of his territory. This is a further stage in the struggle for sovereignty over the south-east corner of Arabia, and therefore for control of an area believed to be extremely rich in oil.

Any shift in local control affects the claims of Saudi Arabia and the Sultan of Muscat, who has placed his interests in the hands of the British. Moreover, in view of the close relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States and the importance to Saudi Arabia of the American oil company Aramco, Anglo-American relations are directly involved.

SMUGGLED ARMS

It seems that for some time quantities of arms, possibly in part from Egypt, but more probably from Saudi Arabia, have been smuggled into central Oman. A British spokesman at Bahrain confirmed yesterday that a tribal rising had occurred, and that the dissidents appeared to be in temporary control; he added that it was expected that the Sultan would regain control of the situation, which was fluid.

An unconfirmed report said that a British officer in the service of the Sultan

had been injured. The fighting was centred on Nizara, the ancient capital of Oman and former stronghold of the Imam of Oman who, with Saudi Arabian aid, attempted to set up a State independent of the Sultan of Muscat. He was, however, expelled by the Sultan in a bloodless campaign in December, 1955.

His followers in the area, no doubt with further arms from Saudi Arabia, now appear to have revolted against the Sultan and have apparently overpowered, at any rate temporarily, the relatively small detachments of the Muscat and Oman field force in the area. These troops have British officers.

In 1955 various local forces were under the Sultan's command. One force in Muscat, on the coastal side of the central Oman mountains, was known as the Batinah force. It had some stiff fighting against dissidents headed by a brother of the Imam of Oman, named Talib, who is known to be a tough and determined leader. Talib escaped, it was thought to Saudi Arabia, where the Imam, who fled from his capital by night, no doubt joined him.

PROSPECTORS' POSITION

TRIBAL REVOLT IN OMAN

"SOME INITIAL SUCCESS"

FLUID SITUATION

From Our Diplomatic Correspondent

A rising of tribesmen in central Oman has deprived the Sultan of Muscat and Oman of authority over part of his territory. This is a further stage in the struggle for sovereignty over the south-east corner of Arabia, and therefore for control of an area believed to be extremely rich in oil.

Any shift in local control affects the claims of Saudi Arabia and the Sultan of Muscat, who has placed his interests in the hands of the British. Moreover, in view of the close relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States and the importance to Saudi Arabia of the American oil company Aramco, Anglo-American relations are directly involved.

SMUGGLED ARMS

It seems that for some time quantities of arms, possibly in part from Egypt, but more probably from Saudi Arabia, have been smuggled into central Oman. A British spokesman at Bahrain confirmed yesterday that a tribal rising had occurred, and that the dissidents appeared to be in temporary control; he added that it was expected that the Sultan would regain control of the situation, which was fluid.

An unconfirmed report said that a British officer in the service of the Sultan

had been injured. The fighting was centred on Nizara, the ancient capital of Oman and former stronghold of the Imam of Oman who, with Saudi Arabian aid, attempted to set up a State independent of the Sultan of Muscat. He was, however, expelled by the Sultan in a bloodless campaign in December, 1955.

His followers in the area, no doubt with further arms from Saudi Arabia, now appear to have revolted against the Sultan and have apparently overpowered, at any rate temporarily, the relatively small detachments of the Muscat and Oman field force in the area. These troops have British officers.

In 1955 various local forces were under the Sultan's command. One force in Muscat, on the coastal side of the central Oman mountains, was known as the Batinah force. It had some stiff fighting against dissidents headed by a brother of the Imam of Oman, named Talib, who is known to be a tough and determined leader. Talib escaped, it was thought to Saudi Arabia, where the Imam, who fled from his capital by night, no doubt joined him.

PROSPECTORS' POSITION

Another of the Sultan's forces was the Muscat and Oman field force. This was concentrated in 1955 at Fahad, an oil drilling station run by the Iraq Petroleum Company, which holds the concession in Oman from the Sultan. The position of the oil prospectors in Fahad may, therefore, be precarious if the Sultan's forces have temporarily lost control.

The company's concession will be the subject of further dispute if sovereignty over central Oman is claimed for an allegedly independent Imam with Saudi backing.

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD CABLEGRAM.

MMC:SS

I. 10002

Dated: 17th July, 1957
2210
Rec'd: 18th July, 1957
0830

FROM:

Australian High Commission,
LONDON

195/2.

1711. SECRET

From External.

Oman

Sultan of Oman has appealed to the United Kingdom Government for military assistance including R.A.F. in relation to internal dissidence backed by arms brought in from Saudi Arabia.

2. The principle trouble is in the area of Nizwa in Hajar Range where the Oman Regiment failed to meet the situation and suffered collapse of Morale. The principle danger appears to be loss of control of the interior of Oman by the Sultan.

3. The Foreign Office is advising against the use of United Kingdom force as the trouble is internal and because Oman is an independent state and not a protectorate. United Kingdom intervention might well produce a difficult situation including protests by Saudi Arabia and possibly reference to the United Nations. They also consider that solution of the Sultan's difficulties lies in political rather than military action. United Kingdom Ministers will be considering the question to-morrow.

MIN & DEPT EA
MIN & DEPT DEFENCE
P.M.'s

18th July, 1957

SEC A/Ss UN PAC&AM AM&SP S&SEA SA EAF&ME E AF&ME
INF DL MT C&P

G

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper P.O.M.E.E. File No. 195/2

Published at ..... Date 2-5-56

[redacted] GUARD

MUSCAT

195/v

39. According to the Egyptian Press, Sheikh Saleh ben Issa el Harthy, described as Deputy Imam of Oman, has arrived in Cairo to discuss with Arab leaders the situation resulting from recent British attacks on Oman and the occupation of Nizwa.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper P.O. MEE File No. 195/2.

Published at ..... Date 18-4-56.

ARAB LEAGUE

29. According to the Press, the Secretary-General of the Arab League will shortly seek H.M.G's agreement to the visit of a Mission to Muscat and Oman (Weekly Summary No. 2, paragraph 33).

195/2

Memo No. 119

28th February, 1956.

The External Affairs Officer,
LONDON.

Persian Gulf

Thank you for your memorandum 115 of 7th February, 1956 (3/12/65/2) forwarding a copy of the F.O. document "Historical Summary of Events in the Persian Gulf Shaikhdoms and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman 1928-1953" which should prove useful.

2. The one copy will be sufficient.

(D.J. Billington)
for Secretary

TEMPLE BAR 2435.

In reply quote No. 3/12/65/2

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
15 FEB 1956
CANBERRA.

CONFIDENTIAL

AUSTRALIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
LONDON, W.C.2

7th February 1956

Confidential

Memo.No.115/56.

copy on 195/1.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra A.C.T.

Summary in Library.

Persian Gulf

...

We enclose for your information one copy of a document entitled "Historical Summary of Events in the Persian Gulf Shaikhdoms and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, 1928-1953", together with Appendices, which has been made available at our request by the Foreign Office. We recently sighted a copy in the C.R.O. and thought you would find this a useful reference document.

2. We would mention that we doubt whether it would be possible to obtain any further copies, as supplies seem short.

N. Gleeson-White

(N.Gleeson-White)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

Mr. Keon: This seems a fairly useful paper. Suggest it be retained on this file, that we thank London & say this one copy will be sufficient.

13/2/56 CR

Mr Boon
Up shows to 15th
entries of this paper
Wk. 11/2
Wk

TEMPLE BAR 6611.
TEMPLE BAR 1567.

In reply quote No. 3/12/65/2

CONFIDENTIAL

1951

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
8 FEB 1956
CANBERRA.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.
AUSTRALIA HOUSE.
STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2.

Memo.No. 97/56

31st January 1956

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra A.C.T.

Muscat and Oman

You may be interested to have an account of recent events in Oman, in order to round out the picture as regards eastern and south-eastern Arabia which is coming more and more into the news. As you know, the Saudis are known to be contemplating an appeal to the Security Council to consider the Buraimi dispute, and there is the possibility too that they may ask the Council to consider the situation in Oman as well.

2. You will be aware from the press that in mid-December last year the Sultan of Muscat and Oman decided to reassert his authority in the Oman Desert, which he was entirely successful in doing. A full account of this exercise was given in the ... "Times", and we attach a set of the relevant articles. We understand from the Foreign Office that these were written by the writer and journalist, Mr. Peter Fleming, who went out to Muscat to cover the expedition, and that he had access to official papers when writing the reports. In particular, we would draw your attention to the article entitled "Imam's Growing Pretensions to Independence", which may be taken as an official account of the Sultan's reasons for deciding to reassert his authority. The Foreign Office emphasised that the Sultan took this course of action as an independent ruler seeking to restore his authority in his own domain; that the Imam had become increasingly rebellious over the past year and was exercising control over some of the tribes in the interior; and that he was endeavouring to reassert himself in other ways, the crowning incident being when he sent a representative to a meeting of the Arab League in Cairo to ask that Oman be admitted as an independent State of which he was ruler. The Foreign Office states that in his increasing endeavours to obtain power, the Imam was assisted and financed by Saudi Arabian influence and bribery. The operation against the Imam appears to have been completely satisfactory.

3. The Foreign Office official to whom we spoke stressed that the Sultan undertook this drive to oust the Imam at his own initiative and with his own forces which, however, include some British officers. Should Saudi Arabia attempt to have this matter included in any Security Council consideration of developments in S.E. Arabia, it would thus be possible to refer to Article 2 (7), and argue that it is a purely internal affair.

4. In our discussions with the Foreign Office, we said we appreciated that the United Kingdom had no role in this matter comparable to her part in assisting the Ruler Abu Dhabi and the Sultan in reasserting control over Buraimi. At the same time we said surely the Sultan had sought British advice before taking this initiative. The official replied that indeed he had and that they had agreed the time was opportune for him to re-establish himself over the whole of Muscat and Oman.

Mr Hamilton

/.. We

Copy sent UN 10/2

GR

CONFIDENTIAL

5. We enquired whether any oil has been found in this area, and it seems that so far none has been discovered. However, prospecting is being carried out by British companies to the north of central Oman, roughly in the area around Ibri and in the Dhofar region in southern Oman. In the event of oil being found in either of these regions, it would of course be in the United Kingdom's interest for a friendly ruler to control the area and for stable conditions to prevail.

6. We are sending a copy of this memorandum to New York, for information.

N. Gleeson-White

(N.Gleeson-White)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Times File No. 195/2

Published at London Date 7th January 1956

AF + ME

SULTAN BACK IN HIS CAPITAL AFTER 1,400-MILE JOURNEY

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUSCAT, JAN. 2

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman has arrived at his capital, Muscat, after his motor journey through parts of the almost inaccessible hinterland in which his sovereignty has just been forcefully reasserted. His journey of nearly 1,400 miles, which began in the south-western province of Dhofar, was completed amid scenes of gay celebration.

By the removal of the Imam of Oman and his coterie, who had a measure of control (through the tribes) over most of the interior, the Sultan has unified his domain and made it, for the first time in this century, a cohesive administrative structure in which all officials are appointed by one authority.

SEARCH FOR OIL

If, as is expected, oil is found at Fahud, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman must enter the reckoning as a new force in Middle East politics—and one firmly associated, thanks to tradition and to the inclinations of the present Sultan, with both Britain and the United States (with whom she has had a treaty of commerce and friendship since 1833).

During his journey the Sultan received the submission of Sheikh Suleiman bin Hamyar, lord of Jebel Akhbar and one of the Imam's most ambitious lieutenants, as well as other lesser chieftains from Nazwa and the surrounding valleys. Later he drove away to the south to visit the oil rig with which Petroleum Development (Oman) Limited are about to begin drilling at Jabel Fahud. The rig is erected in an extraordinary cirque of low hills, their summit removed by erosion. Only one track leads into this place through a narrow gorge in the hills, and the visitor feels as if he has crept into some vast brown empty frying pan. The oilmen live outside the cirque in a small camp of air-conditioned huts, rather short of fresh water but admirably housed and provisioned. The Sultan was shown round the rig by Mr. Angus Perks, manager of the Fahud operation, while the royal bodyguard of Negro retainers followed him about up ladders and down again under scaffolding and out of it, all the time clutching their rifles.

After a visit to Ibri, now headquarters of his forces in central Oman, the Sultan and his entourage, now including Mr. Neil Innes, his British Foreign Minister, moved up to Buraimi, the series of oasis villages which has become internationally celebrated because of the dispute about its ownership. According to the British view, most of these nine villages are the property of the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, one of the protected sheikhdoms of the Trucial coast, and the rest belong to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman; that is to say, none belongs to Saudi Arabia. The Sultan and the Sheikh met to exchange fraternal greetings and to set the seal on their respective sovereignties. Vast was the feast with which they achieved this purpose.

Saying farewell fondly to the Sheikh, the Sultan next drove over the high Omani mountains to the coast, passing through the beautiful Wadi Jizi, with several charming small oases and channels of clear running water. On the evening of December 29 the convoy reached the town of Sohar, a fishing community on the Batinah coast, which was once the capital of the country and is the legendary home of Sindbad the Sailor.

DANCING IN STREETS

From then on all was plain but exhilarating sailing, for the way led along the sands of the coast, with spray sometimes splashing the windscreens of the seven American lorries which composed this unusual convoy. At last, after 12 days of rugged, roadless travel, the Sultan and his companions drove through the mountain pass into Muscat. The tiny capital was alive with flags and bunting. Crowds of country people danced in the streets. Groups of tattered tribesmen waved swords and sticks and sang monotonous melodies. Drums beat, cannons fired, wheezy pipes played, grand sheikhs and dignitaries flocked to the palace beside the harbour to present their compliments. For the first time, the Sultan was in Muscat as sole master of his own land.

AF.ME.

THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DIGITISED IN SECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Times File No. 195/2

Published at London. Date 28th December 1955.

DASHING PROGRESS THROUGH UNEXPLORED DESERT

THE SULTAN'S RETURN TO OMAN

From Our Special Correspondent

FIRQ, OMAN, DEC. 24

Probably for the first time in the present century, a Sultan of Muscat and Oman is sleeping to-night in the heart of his sultanate. His Highness the Sultan Said bin Taimur arrived here this evening, after a secret and unprecedented overland journey from Dhofar, to re-establish his authority in the inaccessible mountainous province of Oman, ancestral home of his dynasty. No motor vehicle had ever made this journey before, and part of the route lay through unexplored desert territory.

The Sultan, who travelled with a convoy of seven identical American-built lorries, was accompanied on this memorable journey (more than 700 miles) by the Wali of Dhofar; two magnificent sheikhs of the Ya Wahiba tribe, with some of their followers; a young sheikh of the Hawasinah tribe; a skilled Beduin navigator; 60 assorted retainers, most of them armed, all of them unquenchably cheerful; eight fated but stoical goats; and your Correspondent.

THREE SECTIONS

To understand the significance of the expedition, it is necessary to know something of the political geography of Muscat and Oman. This independent sultanate, occupying the south-eastern corner of the Arabian peninsula, is divided into three parts—the eastern coastal district of Muscat, the hilly interior of Oman, and the delectable province of Dhofar, on the Incense Coast of southern Arabia, where the Sultan spends part of the year.

In 1913, certain tribes of the interior rebelled against the Sultan's authority, and later an Imam, theoretically elected by the tribal leaders, assumed a measure of authority in the interior. The latest incumbent has, with Egyptian and Saudi Arabian support, tried to establish a totally independent state of Oman, issuing his own passports, applying for membership of the Arab League, possibly jeopardizing the activities of the British oil company working here on concession from the Sultan, and apparently at the same time forfeiting the loyalty of the tribes. Within the past weeks the Sultan ordered his forces to remove the power of the Imam. They did so with virtually no resistance: the Imam relinquished his dignities: and the Sultan has now come to Oman to impose his own authority and appoint his representatives here.

FROM THE CAPITAL

Our journey began on Monday from the Sultan's palace at Salalah, the capital of Dhofar. There the lorries were drawn up beside the glistening Arabian Sea, and the servants of the palace thronged the courtyard to wish us well. The Sultan is a stickler for punctuality, so the engines were tuned up early and the retainers climbed to their precarious travelling positions atop the mountains of baggage. Promptly at the appointed time, the Sultan emerged from the polished hall of the palace, a small but infinitely dignified figure in a turban and long robe, and climbed athletically into the cab of his vehicle. There was a wild shout from the retainers: the great gates of the courtyard were thrown open: the domestics bowed low; and off we went at breakneck speed along the dusty roads of the town. First went the Beduin guide, the red flag of Muscat flying from his lorry; then the Sultan, studying his map: then the rest of us, flapping and jolting for all the world like raiders hot on the heels of an especially despicable enemy.

Our route lay first across the enchanting green plain of Dhofar, with fields of wheat, cotton, and chile, lavish groves of coconut palms, and cool, rushing water channels—perhaps the most favoured spot in the whole of Arabia, so favourable is its climate and so friendly its countryside. Soon we were climbing into the hills of Jebel Qara: flocks of fat cattle grazed in these rolling highlands, and the yellow grass was spattered with pink-blossomed bushes. Sometimes there waved to us a few exotic figures in rags and loincloths, handsome of face and lean of limb. The people of these hills, mostly troglodytes, are of non-Arab stock, and speak an unwritten language of their own. Sometimes to the baggage, goatskin waterbags bouncing, and the goats jolted into numbness. The technique of the drivers was to rush headlong at every obstacle with a gyrating motion of the steering wheel. This usually worked well, but not always; so that at least once all seven trucks were simultaneously stuck in soft sand, each with its gasping train of pushers. Soon the dark faces of the retainers, most of them negroid, were coated with an eerie film of dust.

There were no stops for meals during the day, only a brief halt for midday prayers. Then the lorries were lined up modestly behind the Sultan's vehicle and the company dismounted for devotions, scattering unself-consciously over the desert and bowing to the north-west where Mecca lay. Tea was generally prepared for the Englishman during these halts. Sometimes a tray of biscuits was brought by a smiling servant. Once there arrived two fine fossil shells picked up from the gravel and sent over with the compliments of the ever observant Sultan.

Soon we would be off again, flags a-fluttering. Once a goat fell off, to be picked up none the worse by the succeeding vehicle. Once or twice the navigator lost his way, to be put right by his Highness. Promptly at sunset we stopped for the night, in the bitter cold of the high desert.

In the Sultan's household most things are done at the double, and it is a remarkable sight when camp is struck in the morning. Long before dawn there is the hurried patter of bare feet among the tents. The fires are lit. The engines are warmed. Breakfast arrives with the light: tea, excellent goats' kidneys, and *puri*—a kind of wheat wafer cooked in ghee. Then, like locusts, the retainers attack the tents, 10 men at a time sweeping everything before them—and into the proper containers. The sheikhs, sitting in the traditional circle with their followers, are left sitting there, surprised, when the tent is whisked away from over their heads. In a flash every thing is packed and aboard. A sharp toot from the Sultan's horn and away we go again, pell-mell and helter-skelter.

AF. ME.

SHREWD LEADER

The Sultan is an extremely able and well-read man, and nothing escapes him. There in his truck, dressed in fawn robes and a multi-coloured turban, a sword at his side, a dagger at his belt, he studies maps and compass, calculating exactly the distance

covered, the petrol remaining, water needs, speed, and route. He carries a radio receiver to listen to the news, a thermometer, an aneroid, and binoculars. Never was there a shrewder or more invigorating royal traveller.

The midday halt again, and a deputation arrives from the Beduin. The lorries are so heavily laden, they say, that they are afraid they are going to fall off, like the goat. "Too bad," is the gist of the Sultan's reply, delivered with a kindly twinkle. "You will just have to hold on, won't you?" The Ya Wahiba sheikhs, who move with proud strutting barefoot steps, like noble birds, laugh and return to cleaning their rifles.

Two days of this dashing progress and we found ourselves at the other end of Jeddit el Harasis, inside the borders of Oman. A British oil company is operating in this desert area and has prepared a well defined track from the coast to the oilfield region of Fahud. On the track we found a dump of petrol and water, and beside it a disconsolate-looking sheikh who had been awaiting our arrival for some hours. While the lorries were filled up, the Sultan took him off into the desert and the two men sat down beneath the meagre shade of a stunted

THE SULTAN'S RETURN TO OMAN

From Our Special Correspondent

FIRQ, OMAN, DEC. 24

Probably for the first time in the present century, a Sultan of Muscat and Oman is sleeping to-night in the heart of his sultanate. His Highness the Sultan Said bin Taimur arrived here this evening, after a secret and unprecedented overland journey from Dhofar, to re-establish his authority in the inaccessible mountainous province of Oman, ancestral home of his dynasty. No motor vehicle had ever made this journey before, and part of the route lay through unexplored desert territory.

The Sultan, who travelled with a convoy of seven identical American-built lorries, was accompanied on this memorable journey (more than 700 miles) by the Wali of Dhofar; two magnificent sheikhs of the Ya *Wahiba* tribe, with some of their followers; a young sheikh of the Hawasinah tribe; a skilled Beduin navigator; 60 assorted retainers, most of them armed, all of them unquenchably cheerful; eight fated but stoical goats; and your Correspondent.

THREE SECTIONS

To understand the significance of the expedition, it is necessary to know something of the political geography of Muscat and Oman. This independent sultanate, occupying the south-eastern corner of the Arabian peninsula, is divided into three parts—the eastern coastal district of Muscat, the hilly interior of Oman, and the delectable province of Dhofar, on the Incense Coast of southern Arabia, where the Sultan spends part of the year.

In 1913, certain tribes of the interior rebelled against the Sultan's authority, and later an Imam, theoretically elected by the tribal leaders, assumed a measure of authority in the interior. The latest incumbent has, with Egyptian and Saudi Arabian support, tried to establish a totally independent state of Oman, issuing his own passports, applying for membership of the Arab League, possibly jeopardizing the activities of the British oil company working here on concession from the Sultan, and apparently at the same time forfeiting the loyalty of the tribes. Within the past weeks the Sultan ordered his forces to remove the power of the Imam. They did so with virtually no resistance: the Imam relinquished his dignities: and the Sultan has now come to Oman to impose his own authority and appoint his representatives here.

FROM THE CAPITAL

Our journey began on Monday from the Sultan's palace at Salalah, the capital of Dhofar. There the lorries were drawn up beside the glistening Arabian Sea, and the servants of the palace thronged the courtyard to wish us well. The Sultan is a stickler for punctuality, so the engines were tuned up early and the retainers climbed to their precarious travelling positions atop the mountains of baggage. Promptly at the appointed time, the Sultan emerged from the polished hall of the palace, a small but infinitely dignified figure in a turban and long robe, and climbed athletically into the cab of his vehicle. There was a wild shout from the retainers: the great gates of the courtyard were thrown open: the domestics bowed low; and off we went at breakneck speed along the dusty roads of the town. First went the Beduin guide, the red flag of Muscat flying from his lorry; then the Sultan, studying his map: then the rest of us, flapping and jolting for all the world like raiders hot on the heels of an especially despicable enemy.

Our route lay first across the enchanting green plain of Dhofar, with fields of wheat, cotton, and chile, lavish groves of coconut palms, and cool, rushing water channels—perhaps the most favoured spot in the whole of Arabia, so favourable is its climate and so friendly its countryside. Soon we were climbing into the hills of Jebel Qara: flocks of fat cattle grazed in these rolling highlands, and the yellow grass was spattered with pink-blossomed bushes. Sometimes there waved to us a few exotic figures in rags and loin-cloths, handsome of face and lean of limb. The people of these hills, mostly troglodytes, are of non-Arab stock, and speak an unwritten language of their own. Sometimes a wild shepherd boy chased his flock of goats and scrawny sheep out of our way with a shower of pebbles and a shrill scream.

OIL PROSPECTING

An American oil company is prospecting in Dhofar, and we camped that night on the other side of the mountains, near the company's desert settlement—a few huts, some obscure equipment, the hum of a generator. Petrol tanks were filled and water skins replenished; to-morrow we would strike into Jeddit el Harasis, the great gravel desert which runs away into the Rub' el Khali, the "empty quarter" of Arabia. Oil men are active at both ends of this desert; Mr. Wilfred Thesiger and the late Bertram Thomas both wandered here in the course of their brilliant explorations by camel and on foot; but no motor vehicle had ever completed its crossing, and nobody had ever followed the route chosen by the Sultan.

So we started early in the morning and spent two days traversing the waste. A few hours from camp we passed an oil team: thereafter we saw no living things except a few gazelle, a flock of embarrassed birds, and one thin wandering camel. It was a long, harsh, bumpy, exhilarating ride. The Sultan likes to travel at high speed according to a precise time-table, and this admirably suits the temperament of our Arab drivers. For 10 hours a day or more we raced through the desert, the retainers clinging desperately to the baggage, goatskin waterbags bouncing, and the goats jolted into numbness. The technique of the drivers was to rush headlong at every obstacle with a gyrating motion of the steering wheel. This usually worked well, but not always; so that at least once all seven trucks were simultaneously stuck in soft sand, each with its gasping train of pushers. Soon the dark faces of the retainers, most of them negroid, were coated with an eerie film of dust.

There were no stops for meals during the day, only a brief halt for midday prayers. Then the lorries were lined up modestly behind the Sultan's vehicle and the company dismounted for devotions, scattering unself-consciously over the desert and bowing to the north-west where Mecca lay. Tea was generally prepared for the Englishman during these halts. Sometimes a tray of biscuits was brought by a smiling servant. Once there arrived two fine fossil shells picked up from the gravel and sent over with the compliments of the ever observant Sultan.

Soon we would be off again, flags a-fluttering. Once a goat fell off, to be picked up none the worse by the succeeding vehicle. Once or twice the navigator lost his way, to be put right by his Highness. Promptly at sunset we stopped for the night, in the bitter cold of the high desert.

In the Sultan's household most things are done at the double, and it is a remarkable sight when camp is struck in the morning. Long before dawn there is the hurried patter of bare feet among the tents. The fires are lit. The engines are warmed. Breakfast arrives with the light: tea, excellent goats' kidneys, and *puri*—a kind of wheat wafer cooked in ghee. Then, like locusts, the retainers attack the tents, 10 men at a time sweeping everything before them—and into the proper containers. The sheikhs, sitting in the traditional circle with their followers, are left sitting there, surprised, when the tent is whisked away from over their heads. In a flash every thing is packed and aboard. A sharp toot from the Sultan's horn and away we go again, pell-mell and helter-skelter.

SHREWD LEADER

The Sultan is an extremely able and well-read man, and nothing escapes him. There in his truck, dressed in fawn robes and a multi-coloured turban, a sword at his side, a dagger at his belt, he studies maps and compass, calculating exactly the distance

covered, the petrol remaining, water needs, speed, and route. He carries a radio receiver to listen to the news, a thermometer, an aneroid, and binoculars. Never was there a shrewder or more invigorating royal traveller.

The midday halt again, and a deputation arrives from the Beduin. The lorries are so heavily laden, they say, that they are afraid they are going to fall off, like the goat. "Too bad," is the gist of the Sultan's reply, delivered with a kindly twinkle. "You will just have to hold on, won't you?" The Ya Wahiba sheikhs, who move with proud strutting barefoot steps, like noble birds, laugh and return to cleaning their rifles.

Two days of this dashing progress and we found ourselves at the other end of Jeddit el Harasis, inside the borders of Oman. A British oil company is operating in this desert area and has prepared a well defined track from the coast to the oilfield region of Fahud. On the track we found a dump of petrol and water, and beside it a disconsolate-looking sheikh who had been awaiting our arrival for some hours. While the lorries were filled up, the Sultan took him off into the desert and the two men sat down beneath the meagre shade of a stunted thorn tree, looking in their robes and turbans like figures from a Persian miniature. The news the sheikh had brought was good. No further resistance had been reported from the Imam's supporters. The Sultan's troops were in full control.

ISOLATED CAMP

Thus reassured, we turned north-west along the track, camped one night beneath a glorious crescent moon in a place where a few flowering shrubs refused to give up, and arrived last night at the isolated oil camp of Fahud.

To-day, joined by an escort of the Muscat and Oman Field Force, we moved into the hills—a strange country of green wadi beds, fortress-houses, walled towns, inviting thickets of date palms, and high jagged peaks. Until the Sultan's forces, led by British officers, moved in here last week, it was a region practically unknown to western travellers. Already the inhabitants are hastily expressing their loyalty to the Sultan. Red flags fly from rooftops and pinnacles. A few baffled peasants line the route. From the ramparts of a town called Adam a small boy in a russet robe ran down this morning to say good morning. To-night we are encamped outside the village of Firq, only a few miles from the Imam's former stronghold of Nazwa: by now, no doubt, the miraculous Arab grapevine has spread it through the surrounding mountains that the Sultan is in Oman.

AF. ME.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Times File No. 195/2

Published at London Date 23rd December 1955.

AF. ME.

SULTAN BACK IN OMAN

SECRET DESERT JOURNEY

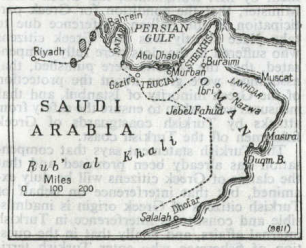
RE-ESTABLISHING SOVEREIGNTY

From Our Special Correspondent

FAHUD, OMAN, DEC. 22

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman arrived here to-night to re-establish his sovereignty in Oman after a secret and unprecedented journey from Dhofar. No motor vehicle had ever made this journey before, and much of the route ran through hitherto unvisited desert territory.

The inaccessible, mountainous province of Oman has not been under effective control of the Sultanate for more than 40 years. The tribes inhabiting it rebelled in 1913, and since then *de facto*



control has been in the hands of a theoretically elected Imam. The latest incumbent tried to set up a totally independent State of Oman, with membership of the Arab League, and was helped both by Saudi Arabia and by Egypt.

The Sultan's forces therefore marched in from Muscat last week, forced the Imam to resign, and occupied his territories with virtually no resistance. The Sultan made his dramatic journey from Dhofar—a delightful, semi-autonomous province on the southern coast of Arabia—to supervise the reunification of his domains and to appoint his own administrative officials. He left Salala, the capital of Dhofar, with a convoy of motor vehicles on Monday, and crossed the beautiful, grassy mountain range which separates that province from the desert. Travelling at high speed for 10 hours a day, he crossed the gravel plain called Jeddat al Harasis, skirting the edge of an empty quarter of Arabia, into Oman and then turned north-west to reach this isolated oil camp at sunset to-night.

To-morrow he will move into the mountains to the heart of the Imam's former territories and accept the allegiance of tribal leaders.

FLIGHT OF IMAM'S BROTHER

STRONGHOLD OCCUPIED

BAHREIN, Dec. 22.—The Government of Muscat and Oman claimed to-day that the Sultan's forces have occupied Rostak, the last stronghold of Tali bin Ali, brother of the Imam of Oman.

The Imam, Sheikh Ghalib bin Ali, fled from his desert Fort at Nazwa last week after putting forward "pretensions to independence." The Government said that his brother was his "evil genius, principal tool, and go-between of foreign instigators."

Tali bin Ali has now fled from his own fort at Rostak, which has been occupied by the Sultan's forces and loyal tribesmen, it is announced.

The Government statement added that the chief of the Imam's armed forces had said that "last July Sheikh Ghalib received 2,200 .303 rifles and 60,000 rounds of ammunition.

Extract from "THE TIMES" 23rd December, 1955.

SULTAN BACK IN OMAN

SECRET DESERT JOURNEY

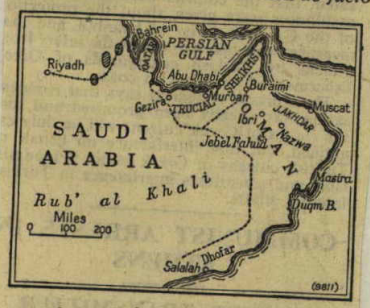
RE-ESTABLISHING SOVEREIGNTY

From Our Special Correspondent

FAHUD, OMAN, DEC. 22

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman arrived here to-night to re-establish his sovereignty in Oman after a secret and unprecedented journey from Dhofar. No motor vehicle had ever made this journey before, and much of the route ran through hitherto unvisited desert territory.

The inaccessible, mountainous province of Oman has not been under effective control of the Sultanate for more than 40 years. The tribes inhabiting it rebelled in 1913, and since then *de facto*



control has been in the hands of a theoretically elected Imam. The latest incumbent tried to set up a totally independent State of Oman, with membership of the Arab League, and was helped both by Saudi Arabia and by Egypt.

The Sultan's forces therefore marched in from Muscat last week, forced the Imam to resign, and occupied his territories with virtually no resistance. The Sultan made his dramatic journey from Dhofar—a delightful, semi-autonomous province on the southern coast of Arabia—to supervise the reunification of his domains and to appoint his own administrative officials. He left Salalah, the capital of Dhofar, with a convoy of motor vehicles on Monday, and crossed the beautiful, grassy mountain range which separates that province from the desert. Travelling at high speed for 10 hours a day, he crossed the gravel plain called Jeddat al Harasis, skirting the edge of an empty quarter of Arabia, into Oman and then turned north-west to reach this isolated oil camp at sunset to-night.

To-morrow he will move into the mountains to the heart of the Imam's former territories and accept the allegiance of tribal leaders.

FLIGHT OF IMAM'S BROTHER

STRONGHOLD OCCUPIED

BAHREIN, Dec. 22.—The Government of Muscat and Oman claimed to-day that the Sultan's forces have occupied Rostak, the last stronghold of Tali bin Ali, brother of the Imam of Oman.

The Imam, Sheikh Ghalib bin Ali, fled from his desert Fort at Nazwa last week after putting forward "pretensions to independence." The Government said that his brother was his "evil genius, principal tool, and go-between of foreign instigators."

Tali bin Ali has now fled from his own fort at Rostak, which has been occupied by the Sultan's forces and loyal tribesmen, it is announced.

The Government statement added that the chief of the Imam's armed forces had said that "last July Sheikh Ghalib received 2,200 .303 rifles and 60,000 rounds of ammunition.

THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DIGITISED IN SECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Times File No. 195/2

Published at London Date 20th December 1955

OIL IN OMANI DESERT

KEY TO RECENT OPERATIONS

HOPE OF RICH STRIKE

From Our Special Correspondent

SALALA, DEC. 19

Many messages of congratulation are arriving at this small southern Arabian town for his Highness the Sayyid bin Taimur, Sultan of Muscat and Oman, whose forces have successfully established his authority in the interior of the sultanate after more than 40 years of divided rule.

Dhofar is a semi-autonomous province within the sultanate and at Salala, its capital —one of the greenest and most beautiful spots on the entire Arabian coast—the Sultan spends the greater part of the year in a big palace beside the sea.

For many years the mountainous interior of the country has been virtually ruled by a rival potentate, the Imam of Oman, who has recently established a dubious contact with both Egypt and Saudi Arabia and has attempted to set up a totally independent State of Oman. This has been both derogatory of the Sultan's legal authority and bad for the security of the British oil men who are working on highly promising territory near the unmarked frontier between Oman and Saudi Arabia. The Sultan, with the encouragement of the British Government, has therefore ordered his forces to destroy the power of the Imam. So far no resistance has been reported.

NO SHOT FIRED

The Imam's power was centred on Nazwa, a town in the heart of the Omani hills. As reported earlier, this place has now been occupied by troops of the Muscat and Oman Field Force—a force financed partly by the Sultan and partly by a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company, which is conducting operations in central Oman.

It was not expected that the Imam would offer much serious resistance. In recent weeks there have been a series of contacts between the Sultan and powerful tribal leaders from the territory controlled by the Imam, and these seemed to show that tribal loyalty to him was weakening. Moreover, earlier this year a column of the Sultan's troops occupied the town of Ibri, near the Saudi border, in the Imam's territory—without firing a shot.

The key to the operation is really Fahud, a point on the map in the Omani desert where British oil men are hoping to find deposits of exceptional value. Drilling is to begin there in January, and to enable the operations to continue satisfactorily local political stability and security is essential. Saudi Arabians not only cherish historic ambition to control the whole of the Arabian peninsula but also cast a particularly covetous eye on any region likely to contain oil; and Fahud, like Buraimi, lies all too near the hazy and troublesome Saudi frontier. Its control by a puppet or close associate of King Saud's would be disastrous.

ADEQUATE PROTECTION

For this reason the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, in granting a concession for oil exploration, insisted that a force should be raised to give adequate protection to the oil men; partly because Fahud is placed in a particularly valuable strategic situation, the British Government have given their support to the Sultan's decision to oust the Imam.

Here, in the southern part of the sultanate, a separate oil concession is being worked by Dhofar Cities Services, an American company. No oil has yet been found, but drilling is in progress, and it is probable that, if it is successful, the southern frontier with Saudi Arabia will be as tense as the northern. A small independent force, the Dhofar Force, is now being trained to deal with any such exigencies. Its only officer is an Englishman, Major St. John Armitage, and its manners and customs are distinctly British—berets, Lee Enfields, precision of drilling and all. The Sultan, a far-sighted and much respected ruler (who with luck will soon be one of the richest men in the world), is in no mood to

AF.ME

Name of Paper The Times
Published at London
File No. 195/2
Date 20th December 1955

OIL IN OMANI DESERT

KEY TO RECENT OPERATIONS

HOPE OF RICH STRIKE

From Our Special Correspondent

SALALA, Dec. 19

Many messages of congratulation are arriving at this small southern Arabian town for his Highness the Sayyid bin Taimur, Sultan of Muscat and Oman, whose forces have successfully established his authority in the interior of the sultanate after more than 40 years of divided rule.

Dhofar is a semi-autonomous province within the sultanate and at Salala, its capital —one of the greenest and most beautiful spots on the entire Arabian coast—the Sultan spends the greater part of the year in a big palace beside the sea.

For many years the mountainous interior of the country has been virtually ruled by a rival potentate, the Imam of Oman, who has recently established a dubious contact with both Egypt and Saudi Arabia and has attempted to set up a totally independent State of Oman. This has been both derogatory of the Sultan's legal authority and bad for the security of the British oil men who are working on highly promising territory near the unmarked frontier between Oman and Saudi Arabia. The Sultan, with the encouragement of the British Government, has therefore ordered his forces to destroy the power of the Imam. So far no resistance has been reported.

AF.ME

NO SHOT FIRED

The Imam's power was centred on Nazwa, a town in the heart of the Omani hills. As reported earlier, this place has now been occupied by troops of the Muscat and Oman Field Force—a force financed partly by the Sultan and partly by a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company, which is conducting operations in central Oman.

It was not expected that the Imam would offer much serious resistance. In recent weeks there have been a series of contacts between the Sultan and powerful tribal leaders from the territory controlled by the Imam, and these seemed to show that tribal loyalty to him was weakening. Moreover, earlier this year a column of the Sultan's troops occupied the town of Ibri, near the Saudi border, in the Imam's territory—without firing a shot.

The key to the operation is really Fahud, a point on the map in the Omani desert where British oil men are hoping to find deposits of exceptional value. Drilling is to begin there in January, and to enable the operations to continue satisfactorily local political stability and security is essential. Saudi Arabians not only cherish historic ambition to control the whole of the Arabian peninsula but also cast a particularly covetous eye on any region likely to contain oil; and Fahud, like Buraimi, lies all too near the hazy and troublesome Saudi frontier. Its control by a puppet or close associate of King Saud's would be disastrous.

ADEQUATE PROTECTION

For this reason the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, in granting a concession for oil exploration, insisted that a force should be raised to give adequate protection to the oil men; partly because Fahud is placed in a particularly valuable strategic situation, the British Government have given their support to the Sultan's decision to oust the Imam.

Here, in the southern part of the sultanate, a separate oil concession is being worked by Dhofar Cities Services, an American company. No oil has yet been found, but drilling is in progress, and it is probable that, if it is successful, the southern frontier with Saudi Arabia will be as tense as the northern. A small independent force, the Dhofar Force, is now being trained to deal with any such exigencies. Its only officer is an Englishman, Major St. John Armitage, and its manners and customs are distinctly British—berets, Lee Enfields, precision of drilling and all. The Sultan, a far-sighted and much respected ruler (who with luck will soon be one of the richest men in the world), is in no mood to encourage any nibbling at his sovereignty.

ARAB REGENT WOUNDED

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

ADEN, Dec. 19

Sultan Ahmed bin Ali, the Regent of the Lower Aulaqi Sultanate, was attacked by men of the Ahi Ali and Ahi Yeslam tribes on Saturday and was wounded. The Regent's loyal tribesmen opened fire and killed two of the assailants. Mr. Johnson, assistant adviser, who was present during the incident, immediately sent a message to Aden, and the R.A.F. promptly sent an aircraft to Ahwar to take the Regent to Aden. An operation was carried out in the Aden Protectorate Levies Hospital. The Regent's condition is reported to be serious.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper: The Times File No. 195/2

Published at: London Date: 19th December 1955

SEARCH FOR THE IMAM IN OMAN

MIDNIGHT ESCAPE BY ROPE

SULTAN CONSOLIDATED

From Our Special Correspondent

BAHREIN, DEC. 18

It is now clear that the Sultan's *coup de main* in central Oman has been entirely successful. However, the Imam himself has not yet made formal submission. He was thought to be still in his own village near Nazwa, but to-day camel patrols searched for him without success.

The original orders from the Sultan to the Muscat and Oman Field Force to take the Imam dead or alive were apparently modified in view of the total collapse of resistance, hence this rather belated hue and cry. Official circles here are inclined to question the wisdom of giving a potential trouble-maker a head start, but the Imam's prestige has been waning steadily, and he has been unable to buy loyalties since the flow of Saudi Arabian funds through Buraimi was stopped. The fact that he found it expedient to make his midnight exodus from Nazwa fort by climbing down a rope at the back suggests that his standing, even in the heart of his own stronghold, was not as high as he could have wished.

Suliman bin Himyar, probably the strongest personality in the area, made an amiable contact with the Sultan's forces on Friday. The example set by so experienced a sitter on fences was bound to be followed; and throughout the territories where the Imam's writ ran—or at least stood a better chance of running than the Sultan's—sheikhs are declaring for the legitimate ruler and Walis appointed by the Imam are disowning their patron.

DESULTORY FIGHTING

North of the great mountain barrier on whose south slopes Nazwa stands a small detachment of the Sultan's forces based on Muscat and commanded by a British officer has had some desultory fighting, in which six hostile tribesmen are reported to have been killed. This was in the region of Wadi Samail, a deep, narrow gorge cutting through the range just east of the 10,000ft. high Jebel Akhadar.

One important result of the reassertion of the Sultan's authority in central Oman will be to make possible the construction of a motor road from Wadi Samail linking the interior with the port of Muscat. The chief immediate beneficiaries will be the Iraq Petroleum Company, who hope to start drilling operations on a promising site at Fahud in a few weeks' time. Machinery and equipment which they have been accumulating at Fahud for the past year has all—unless flown in—had to be landed on open beaches in the Gulf of Masira and hauled 200 miles over the desert. But whether they strike oil or not (and however much one may regret the unveiling of a region whose aura of romantic inaccessibility is comparable to Tibet's) it is scarcely arguable that the establishment of firm administration in Oman will benefit the inhabitants of a territory where doctors, midwives, hospitals, and education are unknown.

It is felt here that the outcome of the campaign reflects credit on the sagacity of the Sultan—he was entirely responsible for the conception and timing of the operations—and on the performance of the newly raised Muscat and Oman Field Force under Lieutenant-Colonel W. A. Cheeseman; 350 men with four old pack guns and a long, precarious supply line is not a large army with which to overawe a vast tract of difficult country traditionally resentful of intruders.

AF. ME.

THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DIGITISED IN SECTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The Times File No. 195/2

Published at London Date 16th December 1955

OMAN "PLOT" CHECKED

REBEL FORTRESS OCCUPIED

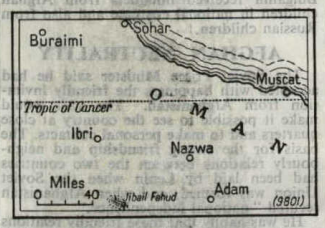
DESERT DRIVE BY SULTAN'S FORCES

A report from Bahrein, quoted by Reuter, says that forces of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman yesterday occupied without opposition the oasis of Nazwa, which had been the "focus of a conspiracy" against him, according to a statement issued by the Sultan.

From Our Special Correspondent

HEADQUARTERS, MUSCAT AND OMAN FIELD FORCE, BEFORE NAZWA, DEC. 15

The Muscat and Oman Field Force is moving against Nazwa, a straggling mile-long oasis in a mountain valley dominated by a massive fort. The fort is the headquarters of the so-called Imam, Sheikh Ghalib bin Ali, whose



separatist aspirations, encouraged and financed by Saudi Arabia and other interested parties, have challenged the Sultan's authority in this remote but potentially important area.

A swift, secret drive by the field force through ill-mapped, almost waterless, desert has gone well. Adam, the first objective, offered no resistance and the red flag, symbol of allegiance to the Sultan (the Imam's flag is white), was flying over the battlements as the force's 43 vehicles—their numbers exaggerated in appearance by the clouds of dust they trail—swept past the city walls to the first water in 60 miles.

CAR UNDER FIRE

The only resistance met so far was at Firq. Here a car carrying the adjutant of the force and your Correspondent came under fire while reconnoitring a fort, but a surrender was negotiated without difficulty, if not without delay.

So far the Sultan's men have fired no shots in anger, nor, more surprisingly, in jubilation. The field force is accompanied by a small unit of artillery transported in three-ton lorries, the first pieces of ordnance to enter central Oman since the Portuguese three centuries ago brought in the cannon with which many forts are still embellished. The force was accompanied by the Sultan's Foreign Minister and various sheikhs from the area who are loyal to the ruler.

Judging from the songs and chatter round the camp fires in the chilly darkness as your Correspondent writes, morale is high. The long journey from Ibri *via* Jibail Fahud and Adam has been not without heat and dust, but in spite of often atrocious going no vehicle has been lost. The general opinion was that Nazwa might be a tough nut to crack, but that it should prove possible, in the words of a well-known ideological ditty, to "raise the scarlet banner high" over the fort in spite of its 20ft. thick stone walls.

"FRIENDLY WELCOME"

BAHREIN, Dec. 15.—A statement from the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, received here to-day, says that the Sheikh Ghalib bin Ali, who had put forward "pretensions to independence," left Nazwa last night.

AF. ME

OMAN "PLOT" CHECKED

REBEL FORTRESS OCCUPIED

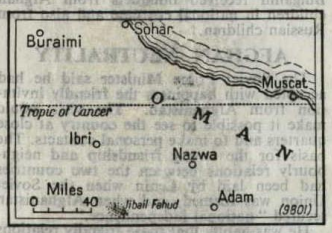
DESERT DRIVE BY SULTAN'S FORCES

A report from Bahrein, quoted by Reuter, says that forces of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman yesterday occupied without opposition the oasis of Nazwa, which had been the "focus of a conspiracy" against him, according to a statement issued by the Sultan.

From Our Special Correspondent

HEADQUARTERS, MUSCAT AND OMAN FIELD FORCE, BEFORE NAZWA, DEC. 15

The Muscat and Oman Field Force is moving against Nazwa, a straggling mile-long oasis in a mountain valley dominated by a massive fort. The fort is the headquarters of the so-called Imam, Sheikh Ghalib bin Ali, whose



separatist aspirations, encouraged and financed by Saudi Arabia and other interested parties, have challenged the Sultan's authority in this remote but potentially important area.

A swift, secret drive by the field force through ill-mapped, almost waterless, desert has gone well. Adam, the first objective, offered no resistance and the red flag, symbol of allegiance to the Sultan (the Imam's flag is white), was flying over the battlements as the force's 43 vehicles—their numbers exaggerated in appearance by the clouds of dust they trail—swept past the city walls to the first water in 60 miles.

CAR UNDER FIRE

The only resistance met so far was at Firq. Here a car carrying the adjutant of the force and your Correspondent came under fire while reconnoitring a fort, but a surrender was negotiated without difficulty, if not without delay.

So far the Sultan's men have fired no shots in anger, nor, more surprisingly, in jubilation. The field force is accompanied by a small unit of artillery transported in three-ton lorries, the first pieces of ordnance to enter central Oman since the Portuguese three centuries ago brought in the cannon with which many forts are still embellished. The force was accompanied by the Sultan's Foreign Minister and various sheikhs from the area who are loyal to the ruler.

Judging from the songs and chatter round the camp fires in the chilly darkness as your Correspondent writes, morale is high. The long journey from Ibri *via* Jibail Fahud and Adam has been not without heat and dust, but in spite of often atrocious going no vehicle has been lost. The general opinion was that Nazwa might be a tough nut to crack, but that it should prove possible, in the words of a well-known ideological ditty, to "raise the scarlet banner high" over the fort in spite of its 20ft. thick stone walls.

"FRIENDLY WELCOME"

BAHREIN, Dec. 15.—A statement from the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, received here to-day, says that the Sheikh Ghalib bin Ali, who had put forward "pretensions to independence," left Nazwa last night.

An official report from Muscat earlier to-day said that "certain disaffected sheikhs" had been plotting for some time to disrupt the sultanate "with the aid of foreign gold, arms, and propaganda." The report added that "such intrigues can no longer be tolerated." Action had been taken to restore confidence, preserve peace, and "answer the petition of loyal subjects."

The Sultan's statement said the flag of the sultanate was already flying on the fort at Nazwa when his forces entered the city. The local people were said to have given a friendly welcome to the troops.

The action was reported to have been carried out entirely by the Sultan's own forces, which include British and Pakistan officers in his service. British-led troops of the Sultan, with those of the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, occupied the Buraimi oasis in October. In addition to the Muscat Field Force, led by British officers paid by the sultanate, the Sultan has at his disposal the Trucial Oman Levies, who are paid by Britain, and who took part in the occupation of the oasis.—*Reuter.*

AF.ME

THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DIGITISED IN SECTIONS

Extract from "THE TIMES" 16th December, 1955.

DESERT DRIVE BY FORCES OF SULTAN

REBEL FORTRESS OCCUPIED

A report from Bahrein, quoted by Reuter, says that forces of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman yesterday occupied without opposition the oasis of Nazwa, which had been the "focus of a conspiracy" against him, according to a statement issued by the Sultan.

From Our Special Correspondent

HEADQUARTERS, MUSCAT AND OMAN FIELD FORCE, BEFORE NAZWA, DEC. 15

The Muscat and Oman Field Force is moving against Nazwa, a straggling mile-long oasis in a mountain valley dominated by a massive fort. The fort is the headquarters of the so-called Imam, Sheikh Ghalib bin Ali, whose separatist aspirations, encouraged and financed by Saudi Arabia and other interested parties, have challenged the Sultan's authority in this remote but potentially important area.

A swift, secret drive by the field force through ill-mapped, almost waterless, desert has gone well. Adam, the first objective, offered no resistance and the red flag, symbol of allegiance to the Sultan (the Imam's flag is white), was flying over the battlements as the force's 43 vehicles—their numbers exaggerated in appearance by the clouds of dust they trail—swept past the city walls to the first water in 60 miles.

The only resistance met so far was at Firq. Here a car carrying the adjutant of the force and your Correspondent came under fire while reconnoitring a fort, but a surrender was negotiated without difficulty, if not without delay.

So far the Sultan's men have fired no shots in anger, nor, more surprisingly, in jubilation. The field force is accompanied by a small unit of artillery transported in three-ton lorries, the first pieces of ordnance to enter central Oman since the Portuguese three centuries ago brought in the cannon with which many forts are still embellished. The force was accompanied by the Sultan's Foreign Minister and various sheikhs from the area who are loyal to the ruler.

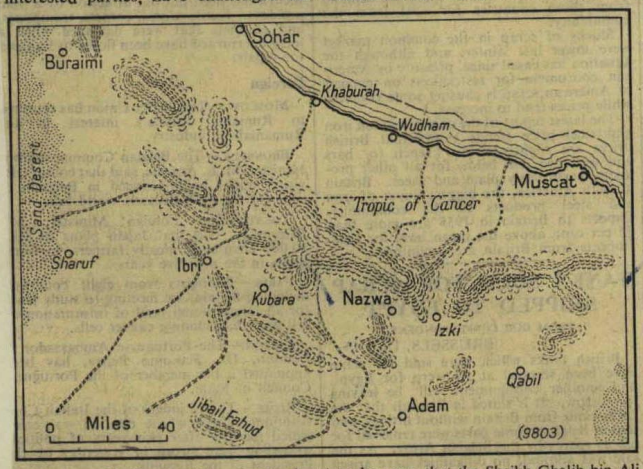
Judging from the songs and chatter round the camp fires in the chilly darkness as your Correspondent writes, morale is high. The long journey from Ibri *via* Jibail Fahud and Adam has been not without heat and dust, but in spite of often atrocious going no vehicle has been lost. The general opinion was that Nazwa might be a tough nut to crack, but that it should prove possible, in the words of a well-known ideological ditty, to "raise the scarlet banner high" over the fort in spite of its 20ft. thick stone walls.

BAHREIN, Dec. 15.—A statement from the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, received here to-day, says that the Sheikh Ghalib bin Ali, who had put forward "pretensions to independence," left Nazwa last night.

An official report from Muscat earlier to-day said that "certain disaffected sheikhs" had been plotting for some time to disrupt the sultanate "with the aid of foreign gold, arms, and propaganda." The report added that "such intrigues can no longer be tolerated." Action had been taken to restore confidence, preserve peace, and "answer the petition of loyal subjects."

The Sultan's statement said the flag of the sultanate was already flying on the fort at Nazwa when his forces entered the city. The local people were said to have given a friendly welcome to the troops.

The action was reported to have been carried out entirely by the Sultan's own forces, which include British and Pakistan officers in his service. British-led troops of the Sultan, with those of the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, occupied the Buraimi oasis in October. In addition to the Muscat Field Force, led by British officers paid by the sultanate, the Sultan has at his disposal the Trucial Oman Levies, who are paid by Britain, and who took part in the occupation of the oasis.—*Reuter.*



IMAM'S GROWING PRETENSIONS TO INDEPENDENCE

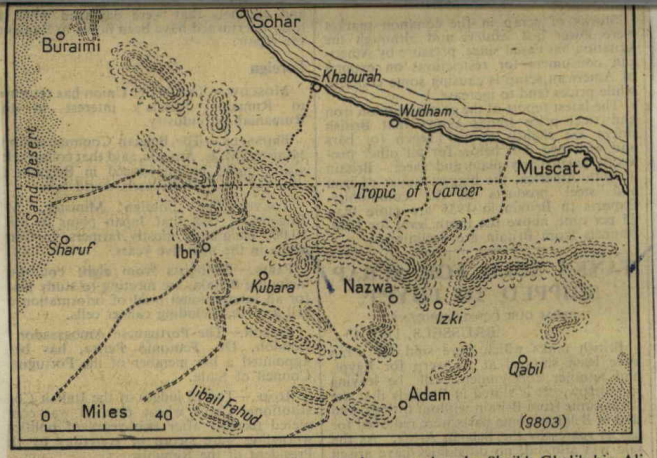
FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BAHRAIN, DEC. 15

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman's decision to restore his Government's authority in the interior ends the period of more than 40 years in which the Government of that independent State (linked by treaty with Britain) has not exercised direct control of certain tribal areas. Since 1920 the office of Imam of Oman has carried with it a sort of hazy and ill-delineated hegemony over some of the tribes who live in this part of Oman.

Within the past year the pretensions of the Imam have grown, with the clandestine support of both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, until a few weeks ago an emissary representing the alleged independent Imamate of Oman attended an Arab League meeting in Cairo to urge its claims for membership. After an Imam, or religious leader, had been separated from that of the Sultan and it became the practice that the Oanis should elect a leader to the office of Imam—the senior religious authority within the former rebellious area. Election is theoretically by tribal vote, but in practice it is by choice of the paramount leaders. Since 1920 successive Imams have therefore exercised a kind of autonomous theocracy within the State.

A series of developments—hopes of new oil strikes, the Buraimi affair, Saudi Arabian expansionist hopes—have recently raised the question of the frontier between Saudi Arabia and various coastal sheikhdoms and Powers which are neighbours. The Saudis, apparently hopeful of realizing their old dream of dominating the entire Arabian peninsula, have been lavish with money and arms in attempts to suborn local leaders into defecting from their present allegiance. In the case of the Imam it appears that they have been successful. It is known that Saudi



Sultan's authority in this remote but potentially important area.

A swift, secret drive by the field force through ill-mapped, almost waterless, desert has gone well. Adam, the first objective, offered no resistance and the red flag, symbol of allegiance to the Sultan (the Imam's flag is white), was flying over the battlements as the force's 43 vehicles—their numbers exaggerated in appearance by the clouds of dust they trail—swept past the city walls to the first water in 60 miles.

The only resistance met so far was at Firq. Here a car carrying the adjutant of the force and your Correspondent came under fire while reconnoitring a fort, but a surrender was negotiated without difficulty, if not without delay.

So far the Sultan's men have fired no shots in anger, nor, more surprisingly, in jubilation. The field force is accompanied by a small unit of artillery transported in three-ton lorries, the first pieces of to-day, says that the Sheikh Ghalib bin Ali, who had put forward "pretensions to independence," left Nazwa last night.

An official report from Muscat earlier to-day said that "certain disaffected sheikhs" had been plotting for some time to disrupt the sultanate "with the aid of foreign gold, arms, and propaganda." The report added that "such intrigues can no longer be tolerated." Action had been taken to restore confidence, preserve peace, and "answer the petition of loyal subjects."

The Sultan's statement said the flag of the sultanate was already flying on the fort at Nazwa when his forces entered the city. The local people were said to have given a friendly welcome to the troops.

The action was reported to have been carried out entirely by the Sultan's own forces, which include British and Pakistan officers in his service. British-led troops of the Sultan, with those of the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, occupied the Buraimi oasis in October. In addition to the Muscat Field Force, led by British officers paid by the sultanate, the Sultan has at his disposal the Trucial Oman Levies, who are paid by Britain, and who took part in the occupation of the oasis.—*Reuter*.

IMAM'S GROWING PRETENSIONS TO INDEPENDENCE

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BAHRAIN, DEC. 15

The Sultan of Muscat and Oman's decision to restore his Government's authority in the interior ends the period of more than 40 years in which the Government of that independent State (linked by treaty with Britain) has not exercised direct control of certain tribal areas. Since 1920 the office of Imam of Oman has carried with it a sort of hazy and ill-delineated hegemony over some of the tribes who live in this part of Oman.

Within the past year the pretensions of the Imam have grown, with the clandestine support of both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, until a few weeks ago an emissary representing the alleged independent Imamate of Oman attended an Arab League meeting in Cairo to urge its claims for membership. After an adjournment to allow members to look up Oman on the map the issue was postponed.

NO BRITISH PROTECTION

The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, unlike other small States on the shores of the Persian Gulf, is not under British protection. It handles its own foreign affairs and runs its own armed force (though the Sultan's foreign minister is a Briton, Mr. Neil Innes, and some officers of his forces are Britons directly employed by the Sultanate). It lies at the extreme south-eastern corner of the Arabian peninsula and has a population of something over half a million.

The country consists of a high mountain plateau with peaks rising to 9,000ft.—probably a continuation of the Zagros range in Persia—merging into the great desert of Arabia and surrounded by a narrow coastal plain. Broadly speaking, the uplands are called Oman and the lowlands Muscat. While the coastal cities have been known to westerners for centuries—Muscat was a famous pirate base—the high hinterland was visited by very few Europeans until in the present decade a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company began explorations there.

These uplands are inhabited by a variety of Beduin tribes, mostly fiercely orthodox Muslims belonging to an offshoot of the Shia sect. The exact political status of each tribe is both obscure and subject to violent fluctuations. Sometimes two or three tribes combine to form a federation, sometimes they claim allegiance to one local leader and sometimes another. In particular they are traditionally grouped into two major factions—the Ghafiri, who believe themselves to have originated in northern Arabia and whose most prominent member is Sulaiman bun Himyar; and the Hinawi, who are supposed to have come from the Yemen and whose leader has in recent years been Shaikh Salim bin Isa.

In 1913 these tribes, together with others living in confused circumstances in the high-[illegible]s, banded together in revolt against the [illegible]untcy of the Sultan of Muscat. After [illegible]rs of hostility certain of the Oman[illegible]e granted a kind of semi-[illegible]s condition under the general [illegible] of the Sultan. The office of Imam, or religious leader, had been separated from that of the Sultan and it became the practice that the Oanis should elect a leader to the office of Imam—the senior religious authority within the former rebellious area. Election is theoretically by tribal vote, but in practice it is by choice of the paramount leaders. Since 1920 successive Imams have therefore exercised a kind of autonomous theocracy within the State.

A series of developments—hopes of new oil strikes, the Buraimi affair, Saudi Arabian expansionist hopes—have recently raised the question of the frontier between Saudi Arabia and various coastal sheikhdoms and Powers which are neighbours. The Saudis, apparently hopeful of realizing their old dream of dominating the entire Arabian peninsula, have been lavish with money and arms in attempts to suborn local leaders into defecting from their present allegiance. In the case of the Imam it appears that they have been successful. It is known that Saudi arms and moneys have been sent to him, and that one bearer of funds was an Egyptian disguised as an Arab. It has been reported that Saudi officers have been training his forces.

TRAITOROUS ACTIVITIES

Recently the Imam not only tried to gain admittance to the Arab League as an independent ruler but also took to issuing his own passports, printed in Saudi Arabia. It is reported that Muscatis working in Saudi Arabia were told that they must either acquire such passports to replace those issued by the Sultan or leave the country (many chose the latter alternative and left). The Sultan has therefore understandably accused the Imam of traitorous activities and has decided to get rid of him.

Operations to perform this task will no doubt be conducted by his principal armed force, the Muscat and Oman Field Force, mechanized infantry with some British officers and some Pakistani instructors. The rapid and bloodless success of these forces and their friendly reception in Nizwa, which had been the Imam's stronghold, is clear evidence that the Imam no longer had the support of the tribes. Sulaiman bin Himyar is believed to have been sitting on the fence awaiting the final issue.

Nobody knows how the Saudis, already embittered by the Buraimi affair, will react. Certainly they and their Egyptian colleagues will accuse Britain of instigating the Muscat action for purely personal ends. Three principal factors may decide whether they will go any farther: (i) the attitude of the United States, which is anxious to renew the lease of the air base at Dharan, in Saudi Arabia, but obviously not anxious to foster new asperities in the Middle East; (ii) the attitude of the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco); (iii) the economic fact that a large proportion of Saudi oil is sold in the sterling market, linking Riyadh closer to London than is generally realized.

Britain is, of course, directly interested, both because of the traditional friendship with the Sultan and because the exploitation of the valuable and strategically placed oil reserves believed to lie in his territory requires security, a stable Government and a friendly administration.

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. Oldham
A. of M. E. - to return

In reply quote No. 508/14

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION,
KARACHI.

30th September, 1955

Memo. No. 1098/55

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA A.C.T.

THE GWADAR PROBLEM

Ever since Partition, the Finance Ministry of the Pakistan Government have been greatly concerned by the extent of smuggling through the port of Gwadar, which is situated in an enclave on the coast of West Pakistan some sixty miles from the Persian border and which belongs to the Sultan of Muscat.

2. Some time ago the Pakistan Government raised the question of solving this problem with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, requesting their good offices with the Sultan of Muscat, Muscat being one of the trucial coast Sheikhdoms under British protection. Hitherto, no publicity has been given in Pakistan to this problem but on 27th September an article appeared in "Dawn", attributed to their London Correspondent, which gave an account of the historical background to the problem and of the current negotiations and, as is usual with Dawn's London Correspondent, twisted both the facts and developments to paint His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom actions and policy in the worst possible light.

Not since 1950 when the Sultan of Muscat paid an official visit to Pakistan
I Oldham
....

3. A few weeks ago Prime Minister Chaudhri Mohamad Ali, in the course of conversation with me on Goa and Kashmir, remarked : "Of course, India is no more justified in her policy and actions in regard to Goa than we would be if we adopted similar tactics in regard to Gwadar". In view of this and subsequent discussions with my United Kingdom colleague, I am satisfied that the attached press article in no way represents the views of the Pakistan Foreign Office and is obviously the result of an indiscreet conversation by some official in the Pakistan High Commissioner's Office in London. It appears that the Pakistan Government has recognised the legality of Muscat's ownership of Gwadar by offering either to purchase it outright or to lease it as a means of controlling the smuggling.

F 195/2

4. My United Kingdom colleague tells me that the Sultan of Muscat is not agreeable either to sell or lease to the Pakistan Government, but has offered to lease it to the British Government, saying that he does not mind what the British Government, in turn, does with it. The United Kingdom Government do not feel that they can bring pressure to bear on the Sultan of Muscat with regard to the disposal of what is agreed by all parties to be Muscat territory, and I gather they do not feel inclined to take on the problem of "sub-letting". The United Kingdom Acting High Commissioner said that since Chaudhri Mohamad Ali became Prime Minister, the rather desultory negotiations and discussions between the High Commission and the Pakistan Government on Gwadar had tended to be accelerated, doubtless because Chaudhri Mohamad Ali, as Finance Minister, always felt much more strongly on the matter than did the then Prime Minister or the Foreign Office. Recently negotiations were transferred to London and an effort was made to secure a settlement direct between the Sultan of Muscat during his visit there and the Pakistan High Commissioner.

orig on 189/11/2

2/.

CONFIDENTIAL

This proved abortive, but the British Resident in Muscat is shortly to visit London and it is understood that a further effort for direct negotiations there will be made.

High Commissioner.

OMAN.

Cairo memo 231 of 6/4/55.
Twenty-Third Session of the
Arab League Council.

"Council considered
Oman's request to join
the membership of the
Arab league and
decided to adjourn
the matter to a
subsequent session".

→ File on 195/2.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper SUMMARY OF WORLD BROADCASTS File No. 195/2

Published at ..... Date December 10th 1957

Central.

C

The situation in Oman The Cairo report of an "Oman" complaint to the Arab League against Britain (No.523, p.2) was succeeded by another, given on 4th December by Cairo's "Voice of the Arabs" (as well as its home service), on Sheikh Talib ibn Ali's meeting with Mahmoud Fawzi (p.33). From this it is clear that the "Imam of Oman" (the Sheikh's brother) opposes the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, but not how far his territorial claim extends. The report that "Oman" wishes to join the Arab League was also given by Moscow in Arabic (p.4).

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper SUMMARY OF WORLD BROADCASTS File No. 195/2.

Published at Date December 3rd 1954.

COMMUNIST BROADCASTS. CENTRAL.

NEAR AND FAR EAST.

C

Reported "Oman" complaint against Britain According to a Beirut broadcast of 27th November, Sheikh Abu Ishaq Ibrahim, the representative in Cairo of "the Imam of Oman", complained to the Secretariat-General of the Arab League "that Britain is illegally occupying several areas belonging to Oman in which oil prospecting is being carried out".

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
-2 MAR 1954
CANBERRA.

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
NEW DELHI.

In reply quote No. 7/8/3.
Memorandum No. 270

1952 20th February, 1954.

Copy 169/11/20

0=1

MEMORANDUM for:-

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

INDO-MUSCAT TREATY.

Instruments of ratification of the Indo-Muscat treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation were exchanged at Muscat on February 14, by Dr. Tara Chand, India's Ambassador in Tehran.

2. The treaty between India and Muscat, which was signed at Muscat on March 15, 1953, affirms perpetual peace and friendship between the two countries.

3. It also provides for the appointment of Consuls in either country and for the rights of entry, travel, traffic and residence of the nationals of either country.

4. There are also clauses regarding commercial shipping or industrial enterprises etc. It further guarantees reasonable liberty of conscience and right of private and public worship to the nations of either country. The treaty will come into force with effect from March 2, 1954.

for Official Secretary.

CS

195/2

9/5/1.

Memo. No. 1469/53

22nd. September, 1953.

MEMORANDUM for : The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

THE BURAIMI DISPUTE.

Reference is made to the Legation's Memorandum No.955/53 of 5th. May concerning the dispute between Britain, as Protector of the Persian Gulf Sheikhdoms, and Saudi Arabia, which seems intent on pushing out its frontiers as far as possible, over the Buraimi Oasis situated on the undefined frontier of the Sheikhdom of Oman.

The dispute, which had subsided over recent months, has been revived by Saudi Arabia. A press release issued by the Saudi Arabian Legation in Karachi on 19th. September accused the United Kingdom of continued hostile action on Saudi Arabian territory near the disputed Oasis. The Legation claimed that British troops armed with machine-guns and supported by armoured cars attacked the Oasis on the 15th.September, causing many casualties in an action which lasted one and one half hours. The Legation added that the Saudi Arabian Government had protested to the British Government against the "intimidation" of the inhabitants of the Oasis.

No confirmation that any incident actually took place on 15th. September has yet been received here.

original a 199/11/2

Sgd. A. P. RENOUF

(Alan Renouf)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

195/2.

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

CONFIDENTIAL

Foreign Office and Whitehall Distribution

ARABIA
September 12, 1953
Section 1

EA 1017/12

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF DHOFAR

Mr. Burrows to Lord Salisbury. (Received September 12)

(No. 87. Confidential) *Bahrain,*
My Lord Marquess, *September 8, 1953.*

I have recorded in separate communications the more important points which arose in my conversations with the Sultan of Muscat at Salalah on August 29 to 31. I am submitting in the present despatch some more general impressions of Dhofar and of the Sultan's attitude which I hope may provide a useful background.

2. It is one of the many paradoxes of Arabia that by going several hundred miles south from this hot-house climate one can discover in the province of Dhofar, within the tropics, a climate which even in the height of summer suggests a cloudy autumn day on the shores of the Mediterranean. Dhofar consists of a semi-circular plain bounded by the sea and by an amphitheatre of hills rising from 1,000 feet to 5,000 or 6,000 at some points. The climate is determined by the reaction between this range of hills and the south-west monsoon which just extends to this latitude. The result is fairly plentiful rain during the summer, an abundant crop of grass on the hills, and temporarily on the plain, and a reserve of water which keeps alive considerable areas of forest on the higher ground and can be tapped for irrigation in the plain. At one point in the hills there is even a fresh water lake several miles long which discharges into the plain by a small but spectacular waterfall. The extent of this fertile area of hills and plain is perhaps 100 to 200 square miles. It is bounded on each side by an infertile tract of mountainous country, and on the north by the arid gravel plain which leads into the great sands of the Rub al Khali. The inhabitants are said to be not more than 20,000, half in the hills and half in the plain. According to the Sultan there is a similar number of cattle, mostly in the hills, which provide the staple sustenance of the inhabitants there and which also produce a not inconsiderable export of clarified butter (ghee). In the plains there are extensive plantations of coco-nut palms, the produce of which is also partly exported, and a number of gardens of fruit trees and vegetables, of which the most noteworthy is that directed personally by the Sultan at Mamura where he seems to be succeeding in growing experimentally most varieties of tropical and sub-tropical fruit. The water resources in the plain are by no means fully developed. Much more irrigation could be done and was done in past ages by underground channels from sources in the hills, and the possibility of artesian wells has barely been examined. I believe that the possibility of a large-scale increase in the cattle population in the hills would also deserve careful study, possibly even with a view to building up a supply of beef for export. The Sultan is conscious in a general way of the great opportunities for development provided in Dhofar and is making such progress as his limited funds and technical knowledge permit. He would welcome further technical advice. I am dealing with this question at greater length in a letter to the department. His Highness's energies have lately been concentrated on building a road through the hills. This has almost reached the gravel plain, on which he believes he can travel by car without difficulty to Ras al Hadd or to Buraimi. He drove me himself in a lorry up the road so far as it has been built. It has been done by one of the Sultan's men with no previous engineering experience and could no doubt be greatly improved, but the fact is that it is now possible for wheeled transport to reach the top of these hills even in the monsoon season and this is in itself no mean achievement.

3. The Sultan's rule in Dhofar is essentially autocratic. It is in fact run not so much as part of the State but as a private domain or fief of which he is the personal owner as well as sovereign. It is impossible to say on such short acquaintance how these conditions are appreciated by the inhabitants. The Sultan's rule is, at least on occasion, harsh. I understand he has cut off the water supply of a village in order

file 195/2

to provide greater supplies for his own gardens. But he has been able to maintain so far undisputed rule with the help of only a small bodyguard which is comparatively ill-equipped and poorly organised. I was puzzled why this uniquely fertile area, which must appear to the inhabitants of the rest of Arabia as a kind of terrestrial paradise, is not constantly invaded by Bedouin from the interior in search at least of momentary plunder, if not of a settled agricultural life. The Sultan seemed to think that this was due partly to the robust defence which would be put up by the inhabitants of the Dhofar hills against invaders, and partly to the insulating effect of the mainly waterless gravel plain along his northern and eastern boundaries and the more or less impassable great sands beyond.

4. Having seen both Muscat and Dhofar I am no longer surprised that the Sultan chooses to spend a considerable amount of his time in the latter. Indeed it is evidence of at least some feeling of his responsibilities that he normally submits for the greater part of the year to the stifling atmosphere of Muscat. Having previously witnessed the remote and ineffective despotism with which he conducts his affairs in Muscat and the rather futile obstinacy which he displayed on his visit to London this year I was surprised and pleased to find that by comparison he was in Dhofar cheerful and enterprising. He still did not aspire to the authority of the traditional Arab leader, based on the open exercise of superior personality in surroundings of apparent democracy, and his relations with his subjects were more those of master to serf than of leader to follower. But in dealing with physical obstacles he showed unusual energy and success.

5. As I have stated elsewhere, the Sultan has formed the idea of using Dhofar as a main base from which to reassert the authority of his Government for at any rate the international interests of Oman. As further evidence of his acceptance of a more forward policy he spontaneously made the proposal I have communicated to your Lordship by telegram with regard to the restoration of his authority in the neighbourhood of Buraimi. He seemed ready to make a new and serious effort to proceed with agriculture and fisheries development projects which have been lying before him for many years, if only we could help him to find suitable experts to put them into effect. He responded much more favourably than hitherto to my suggestions of opening air communications with Muscat and Salalah and he even appeared ready to consider the unification of two out of the three small forces in his territories to which he has hitherto strongly objected. It remains to be seen whether this unexpectedly forthcoming attitude was due only to the invigorating air and freedom from worry which he enjoys in Dhofar, and whether it will evaporate with his return to the climatically and politically oppressive atmosphere of Muscat.

6. As I have reported it is expected that an advance party of the new American holders of the oil concession for Dhofar will arrive there this month to explore and survey likely areas in the province. I sincerely hope that Petroleum Concessions (Limited) were right in believing that there is no commercially exploitable oil in Dhofar. If they are proved wrong we shall have lost a great opportunity. In any case I feel that in accordance with normal American practice the American interests concerned are likely to meet in an accommodating spirit any requests which the Sultan may make to them for technical assistance and equipment for developing the resources of Dhofar even outside the obligations under their concession. The possibilities of development there are so obvious and apparently so easy compared with those of most other parts of Arabia, that I cannot escape the fear that even if no large quantity of oil is found we may see the successful application of American enterprise to this province, which will be in sharp contrast to the failure of British interests to make any notable progress so far in the rest of the Sultan's territories (by no means entirely through their own fault). There is a real danger that Dhofar might be held up as an example of what Americans can do in Arabia with implied criticism of the inadequacy of our efforts in the areas for which we are responsible either governmentally or through British concession holdings. With these thoughts in mind it was reassuring that in the course of our discussion the Sultan said that if oil was found in Dhofar or even if the exploration activities of the Americans developed to any large extent he would wish to engage the services of one or more British officials to act as liaison between him and the oil company, and to advise him generally on the disposal of such funds as he might receive. It will clearly be most important that we provide him with good men for

these posts if they materialise. I also sounded the Sultan cautiously about the possibility of more regular British representation in Dhofar. He said that he would welcome more frequent and longer visits from myself and Her Majesty's Consul-General in Muscat, but indicated clearly that, for the time being at any rate, he did not wish to consider the possibility of the establishment of a permanent British office there. In this connexion I would hazard the guess that if the American oil company are successful in their search for oil or look like spending any considerable time in exploration, the United States Government may desire to open at least a part-time Consular Office to look after them.

7. I feel that in the past we may to some extent have neglected the possibilities of Dhofar. We can now show our interest in the first place by seeking to provide appropriate technical help in the development of agriculture and water resources. (The Sultan said he would be glad to consider a visit by Colonel Merrylees who recently investigated water supplies in Kuwait and on the Trucial Coast.) Secondly, I would hope that we can decide to view with sympathy any practical efforts which the Sultan makes to use Dhofar as a base from which to extend his authority.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to the British Middle East Office at Fayid and Beirut and Her Majesty's Consul-General at Muscat.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

195/2p

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

CONFIDENTIAL

Foreign Office and Whitehall Distribution

Section 1
ARABIA
24th February, 1953

EA 1081/128

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND HIS HIGHNESS THE SULTAN OF MUSCAT ON 24th FEBRUARY, 1953

Mr. Eden to Sir R. Hay (Bahrain)

(No. 30. Confidential) *Foreign Office,*
Sir, *24th February, 1953.*

I entertained the Sultan of Muscat to luncheon to-day, and afterwards brought him back to the Foreign Office for further discussion. Although the luncheon party was small (the guests including only the Permanent Under-Secretary and three senior officials of the Foreign Office, as well as Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Cunningham, Chairman of the Iraq Petroleum Company) His Highness was uncommunicative, but he spoke with great eloquence during our subsequent conversation, which was private.

2. His Highness referred at once to the situation in Buraimi. He saw no objection to our trying to settle the frontier dispute by diplomatic means, but he objected strongly to Turki's presence in his territory. He thought it would be an easy matter for us to remove Turki or to allow him to do so. He had, however, accepted the advice of Her Majesty's Government and had informed his people that the matter had now been taken out of his hands. The resulting situation was most damaging to his position. His people could not understand why he was doing nothing. In the meanwhile Turki, under cover of the Standstill Agreement, was receiving emissaries from the neighbouring tribes, some of whom were being seduced from their allegiance to Muscat. His Highness referred particularly to the defection of Suleiman bin Himyar. This man had actually gone to Riyadh and as a result the Imam had given orders for him to be killed.

3. I told the Sultan that it was quite true that I had been obliged last autumn to advise against driving Turki out of Buraimi. Since then, however, our position in the Trucial States had been considerably strengthened by measures of which His Highness was well aware, and it would be strengthened still further. It seemed to me that Turki's position must be weakened accordingly.

4. The Sultan did not think that there would be any appreciable improvement in his own position unless either Turki were removed or His Highness was able to assert his influence in some tangible form. For this purpose he propounded the idea of building up as soon as possible a force of 1,500 men with the assistance of Her Majesty's Government. This assistance could be given in the form of an advance of oil royalties and if such a force were raised the oil company could operate wherever it considered the prospects favourable. British advisers would be welcome to direct the spending of these revenues, which would bring prosperity to Muscat. In view of the long tradition of co-operation between Muscat and Her Majesty's Government nothing would be more natural or acceptable.

5. I remarked that this was a new idea, but that I would be pleased to examine it in more detail. It might be that it would interest the oil company with whom, with the Sultan's permission, I would propose to discuss it. The company had, however, already offered to assist with the raising and equipping of a force of 400 men for the Huqf. The project was well on its way. Would the formation of this force have a favourable effect on the Sultan's tribes in the North? His Highness seemed doubtful. In reply to my question whether it would be wise to launch the oil company in Central Oman, the Sultan indicated that he saw no objection provided the larger force had been raised in accordance with his suggestion. He affected to believe that opinion in general was now ready to accept the benefits of the production of oil and that the Imam, whose influence he said was much reduced, would not be able to arouse any opposition to His Highness's will.

6. Reverting to the question of Buraimi, I assured the Sultan that we were determined that Turki's influence should be eliminated. Making it clear that I was only thinking aloud, I said that one course might

be to place our forces in positions where they would completely dominate Turki. If the Sultan could also strengthen his position on the other side, we could together make Turki's position quite untenable. The Sultan repeated that what would help him most would be to raise a force of 1,500 men. However, it would be very useful if our forces could also show themselves in Muscat territory. He would welcome flights by the R.A.F. and visits from the armoured cars. I said that this could certainly be arranged.

7. Summing up, I told the Sultan that I could not wait indefinitely for the Saudis to reply to our Note. We would, together with the United States, continue to urge the Saudis to accept our offer. I emphasised that Ibn Saud was our friend. As to Turki I was less anxious in view of the increase in the strength of our position, and I was sure that the visits by our forces to the Sultan's domains would help still further. In the meantime the Huqf project would go ahead. Finally, I would have an urgent examination made into the question of raising the larger force referred to by the Sultan. If His Highness were still in this country when I returned from the United States I would welcome the opportunity of a further discussion on all these matters.

8. Before leaving the Sultan agreed to come to the Foreign Office for detailed discussions with members of the Department.

9. I am sending a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Consul-General at Muscat, to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Jedda and Washington and to the Head of the B.M.E.O.

I am, &c.
ANTHONY EDEN.

195/2

Ref: 2/238
KRC/BB

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM
CANBERRA

CONFIDENTIAL

3rd November, 1952.

Dear Sir,

I am directed by the High Commissioner to transmit for your information a copy of a note on the subject of the Eastern Frontiers of Saudi Arabia.

2. Copies of the above note have been sent to the High Commissioners in London for Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

3. I am sending two copies of this letter with a copy of its enclosure to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs.

Yours faithfully,

G. DAVEY

for Official Secretary.

Enclosure

199/11/2

The Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Ref: 9/3/2

Memo.No. 886/52

P.O. Box 273

Australian Legation, Cairo.

21st October, 1952

MEMORANDUM for -

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

The Buraimi Incident

1. It was reported from London on 11th October, 1952 by the Foreign Office that discussions were continuing in the Buraimi incident and an early amicable settlement was expected. This was the first official intimation that this incident had occurred.

2. Early in September, 1952 reports were received here that about 40 armed men had moved from Saudi Arabia into territory belonging to the Sultan of Muscat in the neighbourhood of Buraimi. Buraimi is an oasis consisting of a number of villages of which some belong to the Sultan and some to a "protected" Sheikh. At the request of the Sultan, an independent ruler with whom the United Kingdom has treaty relations, the Foreign Office had taken the matter up with the Government of Saudi Arabia.

3. The Foreign Office said that this statement was designed to correct a number of rumours which had arisen. There was no truth in a report that the United Kingdom proposed to dislodge the intruders by force. Furthermore, the Foreign Office had no knowledge of projected United States interference in the matter; this particular rumour might have arisen from the fact that some of the men arrived in American trucks. However, the Foreign Office would neither confirm nor deny that the Government of Saudi Arabia was seeking to establish ownership of the oasis.

4. The forty armed men were still in the oasis on 13th October, 1952 and they were understood to maintain that, far from being invaders, they were taking up defensive positions against a potential aggression by the Sultan of Muscat.

5. On 14th October, 1952 the Saudi Arabian Embassy in London circulated a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry at Jeddah denying the reported presence of Saudi Arabian troops in Buraimi. This statement added that the Government of Saudi Arabia had not been aware of the Sultan's claim to this area until he protested on 14th September against the presence there of Saudi Arabian officials. The statement added that this protest had been followed by a flight over the territory by British aircraft, by levies being sent there and by Saudi Arabian nationals being denied entry to the coastal towns.

Sgd. A. P. RENOUF

(Alan Renouf),
Secretary.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

5621.1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 3 SEP 1952

195/2

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs.

....

Referred for information. 3 SEP 1952 195/2

→ Central

Please record change in file no.

A.S. Pearson

(~~F.J. McKenna~~)
~~Acting~~ Secretary

CS

COPY

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

NO. 48.

UNCLASSIFIED.

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE,

DOWNING STREET, S.W. 1.

21st August, 1952.

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 21 of the 28th April, 1952, enclosing a copy of a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between His late Majesty in respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, which was signed at Muscat on the 20th December, 1951, I have the honour to inform you that instruments of ratification were exchanged at Muscat on the 19th May, 1952.

2. The Treaty, which has been in force provisionally since the 4th January, 1952, entered into force definitively on the date of the exchange of instruments of ratification.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,

(Sgd)- SALISBURY.

THE PRIME MINISTER OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

COPY

Old city found in Muscat

San Francisco, June 25.

MR. Wendell Phillips, the American explorer who headed an expedition into the Yemen, has announced the discovery of an ancient city in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.

The expedition took him into the province of Bufar, on the Indian Ocean side of the Arabian tip, an area referred to by the ancient writer Claudius Ptolemy as the centre of the spice trade of the ancient world.

Mr. Phillips said: "Actually we can call this the capital city of the spice trade and our archaeologist, Professor Frank Albright, has identified this as Abysopolis.

"We found a hoard of ancient coins and alabaster and bronze statues," he said. Some expedition members were still there digging and hoping to find something that would date Abysopolis for the learned world, Mr. Phillips said.

"The Sultan of Muscat and Oman has granted us a three-year concession to dig," he added.

Mr. Phillips said that contrary to the current impression, the country was not waste land. It was filled with rivers, forests, high mountains and beautiful lakes. —

Egyptian Gazette
26/6/52

COPY

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE,
DOWNING STREET.

No. 21.

28th April, 1952.

Sir,

With reference to my despatch C. No. 8 of the 14th June, 1950, announcing the Sultan of Muscat's intention to terminate the 1939 Treaty, I have the honour to inform you that a new Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between His late Majesty in respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Sultan of Muscat and Oman was signed at Muscat on the 20th December, 1951. The Treaty, of which a copy is enclosed, entered into force provisionally on the 1st January, 1952 and will enter into force definitively on the exchange of instruments of ratification. Her Majesty has ratified the Treaty. The Sultan has not yet done so, but it is expected that he will do so and that the exchange of instruments of ratification will take place before the expiry of the period of five months referred to in Article 16(3), i.e. before the 20th May, 1952.

2. Apart from a number of minor amendments, the new Treaty differs in two important respects from the Treaty of 1939. Article 20 of the 1939 Treaty provided for the accession to the Treaty of any other Members of the Commonwealth who wished to accede. Article 21(1) made provision for the goods of those Members of the Commonwealth who did not so wish to enjoy most favoured nation treatment on a reciprocal basis in the territories of the Sultan. Similarly in Article 1 of the 1939 Treaty "territories of His Majesty" were defined as including any territories to which the Treaty applied by reason of extension under Article 20; and "nationals of His Majesty" were defined as meaning all subjects of His Majesty and all persons under his protection, wherever domiciled (with certain special exceptions). "British vessels" and "British aircraft" were likewise defined as vessels and aircraft registered under the law of any part of the Commonwealth. Since it would now be inappropriate for a Treaty negotiated in respect of the United Kingdom to extend to British subjects belonging to other Members of the Commonwealth there is no accession clause in the new Treaty corresponding to Article 20 in the old Treaty; nor is there any Article corresponding to old Article 21, providing for the grant of most favoured nation treatment for the goods of other Members of the Commonwealth. Similarly, in Article 1 of the new Treaty "territories of His Majesty" are defined so as not to include territories of other Members of the Commonwealth and "nationals of His Majesty" so as not to include citizens of other Member countries. The terms "British vessels" and "British aircraft" have been given a similar restricted meaning.

3. The second respect in which the new Treaty differs materially from the old is in the arrangements for the exercise of extra-territorial jurisdiction by the United Kingdom Consular authorities in Muscat. Articles 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the 1939 Treaty, which provided for the exercise of this privilege, have been replaced by a separate exchange of letters published with the new Treaty. The Sultan has agreed that nationals of the Commonwealth of Australia shall enjoy the same right to Consular jurisdiction as citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies except in criminal cases or civil suits in which the complainant or plaintiff is the Sultan's Government or a national of the Sultan and in certain bankruptcy cases. These arrangements are set out in paragraph (3) of Letter No. 1. It will be noticed that they differ in some minor particulars from the arrangements which it was expected would be made when the United Kingdom High Commissioner sought the views of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia in November 1951. It will also be noticed that the expectation that it would be necessary to agree to an arrangement whereby at the personal request of the Sultan the United Kingdom Consul would arrange departure of any undesirable Australian citizens has not been fulfilled. Paragraph (7) of Letter No. 1 makes provision on these lines only for nationals of Her Majesty as defined in paragraph (1), i.e. not for citizens of Member countries of the Commonwealth other than the United Kingdom.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient, humble Servant,

(sgd.) SALISBURY.

THE PRIME MINISTER OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

COPY

1951/2

Britain and Muscat sign new treaty

London, Dec. 20.

BRITAIN and the Sultanate of Muscat on the Persian Gulf today signed a traty of friendship, commerce and navigation giving each other most-favoured-nation treatment.

The Sultanate of Muscat is one of the potentially rich oil bearing territories on the Persian Gulf. It has been in treaty relations with Britain for more than 150 years.

The treaty was signed in Muscat today by the Sultan and the British Political Representative for the Persian Gulf, Sir Rupert Hay. It replaces one signed in 1939 which expires on December 31 this year and will run for 15 years from the date of ratification. — Reuter.

E. Gazette
Fri. 21 Dec. 51.

1) R. Lee
2) Col Bot to see
3) Return to Central

file

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom,
CANBERRA.

10th August, 1951.

Ref: 3/353.
M:P

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter No. 200/8 of the 1st May concerning the termination of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of 1939 by the Sultan of Muscat, I am directed by the Acting High Commissioner to inform you that the Sultan of Muscat was unwilling to accept the proposed modification of the 1939 Treaty during the period of prolongation. Therefore, with the concurrence of the Government of India, an Exchange of Notes between the Sultan and the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, has now taken place extending the 1939 Treaty in its present form until 10th October, 1951.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) JAMES MARJORIBANKS

Official Secretary.

The Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department,
CANBERRA.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

195/2

CABLEGRAM.

FEL:NP

O.10280.

Sent: 26th June, 1951
1340.

CABLEGRAM TO:

His Britannic Majesty's Consul,
M U S C A T.

EX281. UNCLASSIFIED.

Mandated Airlines Ltd., is making ferry flight from Nairobi to Lae with two De Havilland Dove Aircraft bearing Australian registration markings VH-MAB and MH-MAL which according to proposed itinerary will call at Salalah on 3rd July 1951 and Masira on 4th July, 1951. Captains of aircraft are L. A. Davis and J. K. Perry. It would be greatly appreciated if you would seek landing permission from appropriate authorities. Would also appreciate your urgent advice of the approval of the Oman authorities.

E.A. (1454/21/61)
Civil Aviation
P.M.'s

26th June, 1951

Secret
A.S. (U.N.)
A.S. (E.R.)
A.S. (Admin.)
C.R. (L. & I.)
U.N.
Tec. Ass.
E.R.
Pac.
West
General
P.I.
Coo. & Pro.
Ant.
Admin
Finance
Ex. Comm.

Note for file 195/2

We have memo from U.K. H.C. advising that the existing treaty between UK Govt & the Sultan of Muscat is being revised, and asking if we are anxious that the right of extraterritoriality should continue to be conceded to Australian nationals and included in the new treaty.

CN
14/2

PA

195/2

FOR LEGAL AND CONSULAR SECTION:

RIGHTS OF EXTRATERRITORIALITY IN MUSCAT.

The relevant article, No. XIII, of the Treaty now being revised by the United Kingdom and Muscat, gives United Kingdom consular representatives the right to determine civil and criminal charges against British subjects including citizens of the Commonwealth, but excluding British subjects who are of the Moslem faith.

2. It can be assumed that originally the inclusion of this concession in the Treaty was found necessary either because of the use of ~~the~~ harsh Koranic law or even the complete absence of any organised system of justice in the Sultan's territories. A chance Australian passing through may have been grateful of this protection, but the cases must have been rare, and probably will not become more frequent. It will be noted that we have no record that any similar protection is extended by treaty to Australians passing through Yemen on Saudi Arabia, territories similar to Muscat in development. Moreover, it is likely that should we press for the inclusion of our nationals in this concession, we may jeopardize the chances of the United Kingdom Government's securing its continuation for the benefit of its nationals; and the United Kingdom High Commission's memorandum unmistakably implies that the U.K. Government are not at all anxious to plea on behalf of all Commonwealth countries. This can be readily appreciated as the Sultan would hesitate to continue to sanction a privileged status for the citizens of Pakistan and India, who, we understand from time to time are engaged in doubtful trading activities in the Sultan's territories.

3. Concession We do not seem to be justified in asking for this unless it is clear that the advantages we might gain would outweigh the disadvantages to the United Kingdom should the concession be lost.

E.A. & M.E.
CN.IR.
12th February, 1951.

SECRET.

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA IN PAKISTAN.

File No. 508

Memo. No. 538/50

Clifton, KARACHI.

21st August, 1950.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

195/2

Gwadur.

I refer to my memoranda Nos. 897 and 925 of the 2nd and 7th December, 1949, respectively, concerning the visit to Pakistan of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

2. It will be recalled that the Sultan of Muscat administers the territory of Gwadur, a small enclave with a population of approximately 14,000 lying between the ports of Pasni and Jawani on the Makran Coast in South Baluchistan (Pakistan). For territorial, administrative and customs purposes the Government of Pakistan has for some time past been attempting to negotiate the purchase or lease of the territory from the Sultan.

3. When the Sultan refused an offer by Pakistan some weeks ago, the Pakistan Government approached the United Kingdom Government for diplomatic assistance in bringing about a satisfactory settlement. (The United Kingdom has a Consul at Muscat and an Agent at Gwadur with extra-territorial authority.) I understand that the United Kingdom Government have promised their support if the Pakistan Government now makes the Sultan a more generous offer. They have emphasised, however, that they feel a certain responsibility to the Sultan who has also requested their good offices in the matter.

4. In the meantime, the present state of affairs is satisfactory to neither party. Owing to the acute shortage of food in the Persian Gulf ports large quantities of foodgrains and rice are being smuggled into Gwadur from Pakistan to the detriment of the Pakistani inhabitants of Makran, while the Pakistan Customs are losing considerable sums in revenue as a result of smuggling in the reverse direction in such articles as cloth, sugar, gold, matches and cigarettes. On his side the Sultan has complained that mails from Gwadur to Muscat, which are handled by Pakistan officials, are being interfered with and subjected to unduly long delays.

John: Oldham

High Commissioner.

RLH
ME.
PA

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. CANBERRA.

Name of Paper. Extract from Iraq Command File No. 195/2

Published at. Intelligence Review. Date. 1950

Muscat.

PA on 195/2

Border claims by Ibn Saud contined during the year. In March there was a minor clash between two tribes. Early in the year I.P.C. announced that they intended to prospect in the Huqf area, inland from Masirah Island, if they could obtain the necessary permission and protection.

In September the Ruler of Mekran demanded that the province of Gwadur be handed over to him, and imposed a blockade on the landward side, with only minor effect. The reactions of the inhabitants were not strong, and it is likely that they will remain subject to Muscat.

On 27th September there was a mutiny of Pakistani nationals in the Muscat infantry, during the absence of the new commander of the force, Major C.G. Campbell. After some difficulties had been overcome, the matter was settled without resorting to force, and subsequently 90 Baluchis were discharged and repatriated. The total strength of the force was thereby reduced by about one third.

Extract from Iraq Command Intelligence Review 1950

SECRET.

File No. 508

Memo. No. 438/50 Clifton, KARACHI.

21st August, 1950.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Gwadur.

I refer to my memoranda Nos. 897 and 925 of the 2nd and 7th December, 1949, respectively, concerning the visit to Pakistan of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

2. It will be recalled that the Sultan of Muscat administers the territory of Gwadur, a small enclave with a population of approximately 14,000 lying between the ports of Pasni and Jawani on the Makran Coast in South Baluchistan (Pakistan). For territorial, administrative and customs purposes the Government of Pakistan has for some time past been attempting to negotiate the purchase or lease of the territory from the Sultan.

3. When the Sultan refused an offer by Pakistan some weeks ago, the Pakistan Government approached the United Kingdom Government for diplomatic assistance in bringing about a satisfactory settlement. (The United Kingdom has a Consul at Muscat and an Agent at Gwadur with extra-territorial authority.) I understand that the United Kingdom Government have promised their support if the Pakistan Government now makes the Sultan a more generous offer. They have emphasised, however, that they feel a certain responsibility to the Sultan who has also requested their good offices in the matter.

4. In the meantime, the present state of affairs is satisfactory to neither prty. Owing to the acute shortage of food in the Persian Gulf ports large quantities of foodgrains and rice are being smuggled into Gwadur from Pakistan to the detriment of the Pakistani inhabitants of Makran, while the Pakistan Customs are losing considerable sums in revenue as a result of smuggling in the reverse direction in such articles as cloth, sugar, gold, matches and cigarettes. On his side the Sultan has complained that mails from Gwadur to Muscat, which are handled by Pakistan officials, are being interfered with and subjected to unduly long delays.

High Commissioner.

CONFIDENTIAL.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
REC'D 14 DEC 1949
File No. 195/2

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA IN PAKISTAN.
Clifton, KARACHI.

File No. 508/49

Memo. No. 925/49

7th December, 1949.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Pakistan - Visit of His Highness the Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

My memorandum No. 897/49 of 2/12/1949.

In continuation of the memorandum above referred to, I have learned that, in addition to cementing the ties between two Muslim peoples, Pakistan is very interested in the tightening of the customs regulations between Pakistan and one portion of the Sultan's territory (Oman). While I have no doubt but that the accession of the Sultan's territory to Pakistan would be welcomed, I have learned from the Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations that this is not being put forward as the policy of Pakistan, but that the aim of his Government is to bring about a satisfactory arrangement with regard to customs matters.

Good God, I should think so!

2. This is the first time that a ruler of an independent State has been in Pakistan for a considerable period, and certainly no opportunity was missed to do him honour. Beside the functions set out in my memorandum under reference, the Governor-General gave a garden-party in his honour, the Prime Minister gave a luncheon party and His Highness attended the cricket match between the Commonwealth and local teams. In a short conversation with me he broke his customary silence by complimenting Australia on her cricketers. It will be of interest to see if the visit pays the dividends hoped for.

Pukka!

3. His Highness left Karachi last Sunday. He was accompanied to the airport by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations and the Chief of Protocol.

John: Oldham

High Commissioner.

RCH
JL on return
J P.A.

C O N F I D E N T I A L.

File No. 508/49

Memo. No. 925/49

Clifton, KARACHI.

7th December, 1949.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Pakistan - Visit of His Highness the Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

My memorandum No. 897/49 of 2/12/1949.

In continuation of the memorandum above referred to, I have learned that, in addition to cementing the ties between two Muslim peoples, Pakistan is very interested in the tightening of the customs regulations between Pakistan and one portion of the Sultan's territory (Oman). While I have no doubt but that the accession of the Sultan's territory to Pakistan would be welcomed, I have learned from the Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations that this is not being put forward as the policy of Pakistan, but that the aim of his Government is to bring about a satisfactory arrangement with regard to customs matters.

2. This is the first time that a ruler of an independent State has been in Pakistan for a considerable period, and certainly no opportunity was missed to do him honour. Beside the functions set out in my memorandum under reference, the Governor-General gave a garden-party in his honour, the Prime Minister gave a luncheon party and His Highness attended the cricket match between the Commonwealth and local teams. In a short conversation with me he broke his customary silence by complimenting Australia on her cricketers. It will be of interest to see if the visit pays the dividends hoped for.

3. His Highness left Karachi last Sunday. He was accompanied to the airport by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations and the Chief of Protocol.

High Commissioner.

CONFIDENTIAL.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd DEC 1949
File No

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA IN PAKISTAN.

File No. 508

Memo. No. 897/49

Clifton, KARACHI.

2nd December, 1949.

195/2

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Visit to Pakistan of His Highness the Sultan of Muscat.

His Highness Syed Said Bin Taimur, Sultan of Muscat, arrived in Karachi on a visit yesterday. He was received, on his arrival at the airport, by the Chief of Protocol, Government of Pakistan, accompanied by the United Kingdom High Commissioner, the Military Secretary to the Governor-General of Pakistan, the Director-General of Civil Aviation, the Administrator of Karachi and other officials. A guard of honour received the Sultan and he was given a 21-gun salute.

Bravo!

2. The Sultan is staying with the Governor-General of Pakistan, who gave a dinner party last night in his honour to which were invited the senior members of the diplomatic corps in Karachi, including the British Commonwealth High Commissioners, together with members of the Government and heads of departments. I am informed by the U.K. High Commissioner that the Sultan's visit is being "played up" by the Pakistan Government because of the proximity of part of his territory (Oman) to Baluchistan, which forms part of Pakistan.

John: Oldham

High Commissioner.

M

PA

CONFIDENTIAL.

File No. 508

Memo. No. 897/49

Clifton, KARACHI.

2nd December, 1949.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Visit to Pakistan of His Highness the Sultan of Muscat.

His Highness Syed Said Bin Taimur, Sultan of Muscat, arrived in Karachi on a visit yesterday. He was received, on his arrival at the airport, by the Chief of Protocol, Government of Pakistan, accompanied by the United Kingdom High Commissioner, the Military Secretary to the Governor-General of Pakistan, the Director-General of Civil Aviation, the Administrator of Karachi and other officials. A guard of honour received the Sultan and he was given a 21-gun salute.

2. The Sultan is staying with the Governor-General of Pakistan, who gave a dinner party last night in his honour to which were invited the senior members of the diplomatic corps in Karachi, including the British Commonwealth High Commissioners, together with members of the Government and heads of departments. I am informed by the U.K. High Commissioner that the Sultan's visit is being "played up" by the Pakistan Government because of the proximity of part of his territory (Oman) to Baluchistan, which forms part of Pakistan.

High Commissioner.

TELEGRAMS : "AUSTCOM." NEW DELHI.
TELEPHONES : 40041, 40042 & 40043.
POST BOX NO. 254.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
30 NOV 1949
195/2

File No.7/31/1:

Del. No. 1024/49

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA IN INDIA,
AUSTRALIA OFFICE,
CONNAUGHT PLACE,
NEW DELHI.

MEMORANDUM FOR:

23rd November, 1949.

Muscat & Oman

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

VISIT OF THE SULTAN OF MUSCAT

The Sultan of Muscat has just spent three days inDelhi on what has been described as a goodwill visit. We are not sure what was the exact nature of his discussions with the Government of India, but have learnt from the United Kingdom High Commission that Muscat has been resisting an Indian proposal to establish a consulate to care for the Indian trading community in the Sultanate. Muscat has claimed that Indians should be regarded as British subjects, and should continue to be dealt with under existing arrangements, which are governed by the 1939 Treaty with the United Kingdom Government with which the Government of India was associated. The United Kingdom authorities are endeavouring to indicate to the Sultan that the situation has changed, now that India is independent, and that Indians can no longer be regarded as British subjects after 26th January. As far as they know, however, this particular question was not brought up during the Sultan's present visit, and in any case the Indian plan to post Consuls in the Persian Gulf is believed tohave been scrapped as part of the present programme of administrative retrenchment.

2. Muscat is regarded as strategically important, owing to its position at the entrance of the Persian Gulf proper, and the considerable reserves of oil known to exist within its territories. British companies have secured the right to exploit these, but some difficulty may eventually arise over the undefined frontier with Saudi Arabia, where the Americans have similar rights.

J.C.G. Kevin

(J.C.G. Kevin)
Official Secretary

PA

TELEGRAMS : "AUSTCOM." NEW DELHI.
TE[redacted]ES : 40041, 40042 & 40043.
POS[redacted]O. 254.

File No.7/31/1:

Del. No. 1024/49

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA IN INDIA.
AUSTRALIA OFFICE,
CONNAUGHT PLACE,
NEW DELHI.

MEMORANDUM FOR:

23rd November, 1949.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

VISIT OF THE SULTAN OF MUSCAT

The Sultan of Muscat has just spent three days inDelhi on what has been described as a goodwill visit. We are not sure what was the exact nature of his discussions with the Government of India, but have learnt from the United Kingdom High Commission that Muscat has been resisting an Indian proposal to establish a consulate to care for the Indian trading community in the Sultanate. Muscat has claimed that Indians should be regarded as British subjects, and should continue to be dealt with under existing arrangements, which are governed by the 1939 Treaty with the United Kingdom Government with which the Government of India was associated. The United Kingdom authorities are endeavouring to indicate to the Sultan that the situation has changed, now that India is independent, and that Indians can no longer be regarded as British subjects after 26th January. As far as they know, however, this particular question was not brought up during the Sultan's present visit, and in any case the Indian plan to post Consuls in the Persian Gulf is believed tohave been scrapped as part of the present programme of administrative retrenchment.

2. Muscat is regarded as strategically important, owing to its position at the entrance of the Persian Gulf proper, and the considerable reserves of oil known to exist within its territories. British companies have secured the right to exploit these, but some difficulty may eventually arise over the undefined frontier with Saudi Arabia, where the Americans have similar rights.

J.C.G. Kevin
(J.C.G. Kevin)
Official Secretary